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PUNCH OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI—WEDNESDAY, JULY 15 1953

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PUNCH



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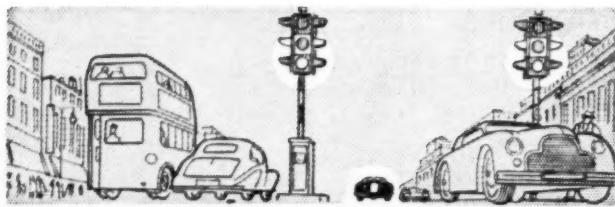


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to the late King George VI.
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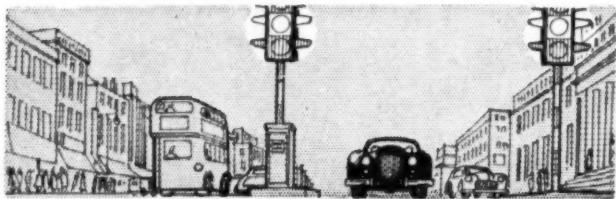
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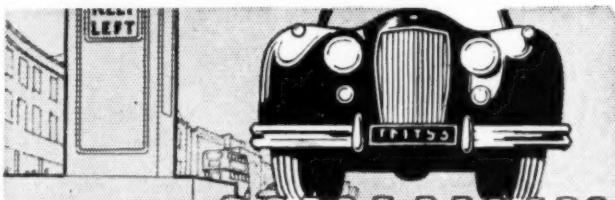
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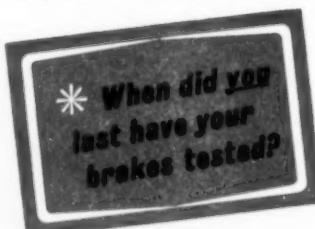
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Anthony Quayle gave his wife Dorothy Hyson a Parker '51' for her birthday

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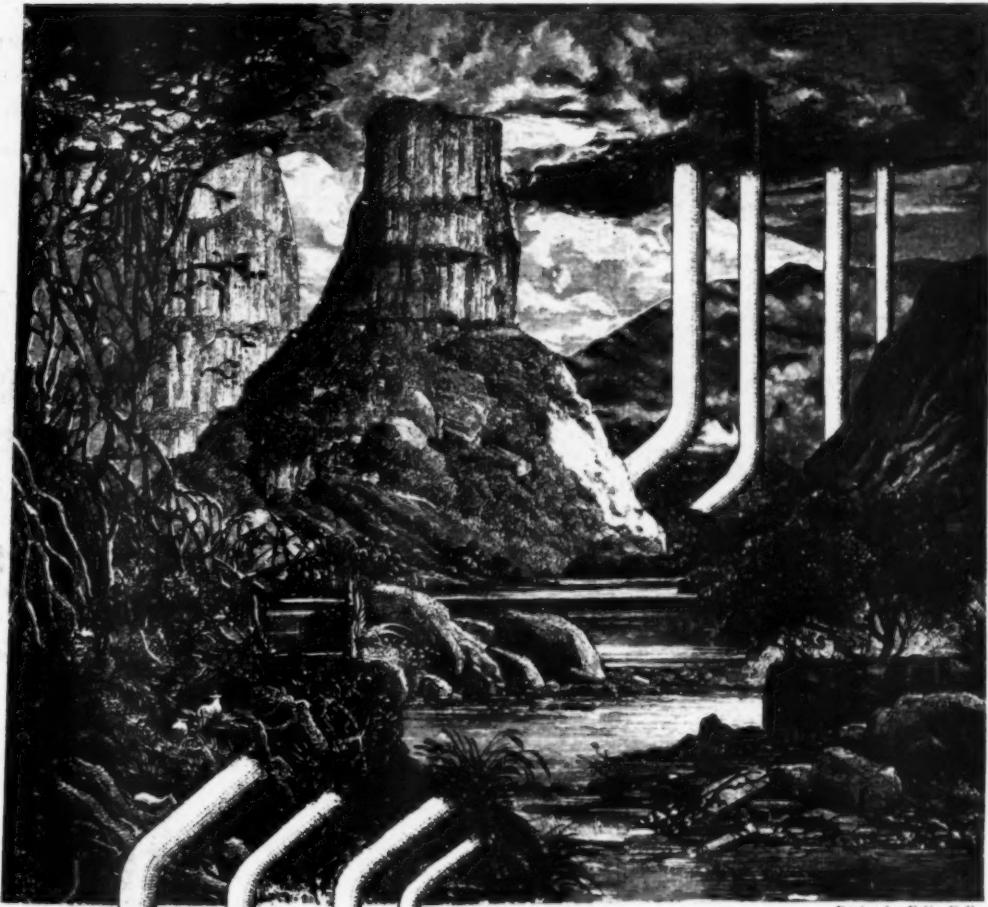
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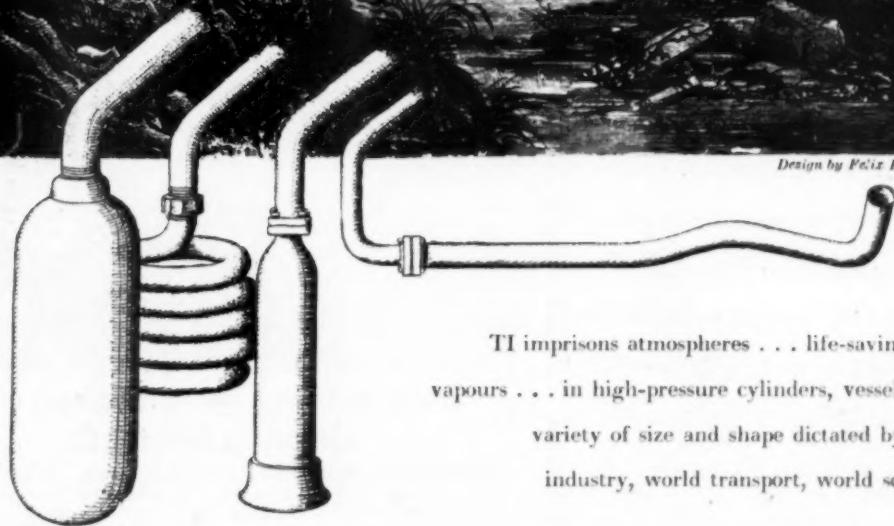
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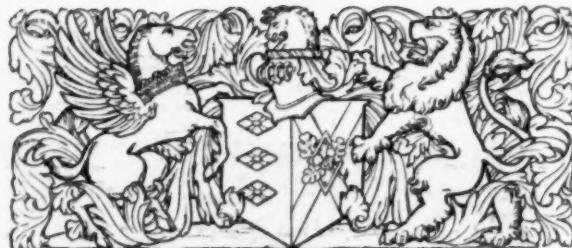
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ORIGINAL BLEND • EMPIRE BLEND



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The safe way to safety

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You will be wise if you apply this lesson in your own home. Wherever and whenever, about your house and its contents, you suspect a possible source of infection, use 'Dettol' promptly.

From all chemists



CHARIVARIA

SENATOR McCARTHY's order withdrawing an edition of *The Canterbury Tales* from American libraries is said to have marked his disapproval of the illustrator, an artist alleged to be politically unreliable. There is a feeling in ecclesiastical circles, however, that the Senator was really getting at someone quite different.



much thoughtless criticism. It should be realized that it is, after all, a part of Mr. Head's concern to fit these young fellows for a return to civilian life.

Householders have been much dispirited by Mr. Geoffrey Lloyd's decision to raise the price of coal. There is brighter news from Ashford, Middlesex, however; in a railway siding there the other day a wagon-load of the stuff actually caught fire.

A recent report, by doctors of Birmingham University, that British children are cutting their second teeth much earlier in life than their parents did, offers no hint of the reason for this. It might have been ewe.

The Swift's flight from London to Paris in just over nineteen minutes has caused great excitement in British diplomatic circles. At last there is a

sporting chance of catching a French Prime Minister still in office.

That Mixed Blessing Again

"The Navajo Indians are to hold one of their most sacred all-night ceremonies at the next full moon to thank the gods of the Lukachukai Mountains, Eastern Arizona, where uranium for atom bombs is mined. The uranium has brought the tribe unexpected wealth."

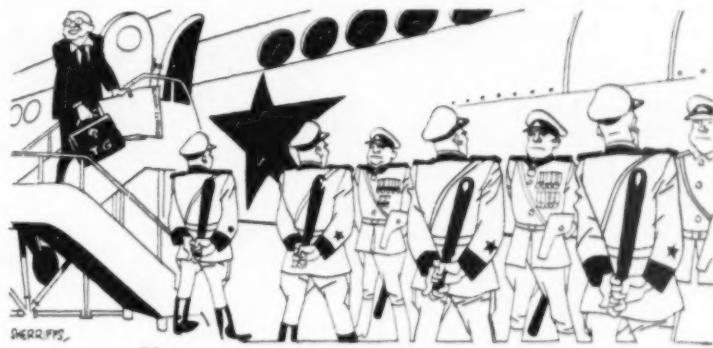
Daily Telegraph

"When the moon is full again, at the end of the month, the Navajo Indians are going to appease Ye' ('terrible one'), the talking god of the blue Lukachukai Mountains. They feel they must put things right for having sold uranium from his hills . . ."

Daily Express

Drivers of heavy lorries who increased their speed in anticipation of an official relaxation of the twenty-mile-an-hour limit are suddenly dropping back to their usual forty-five.

It is thought that *Sunday Express* readers may have detected a certain flatness in Mr. John Gordon's current dispatches on his experiences among the Russians—especially after the promising sub-heading, "First Impressions as They Hit You."





IT would be idle to pretend that the downfall of Beria has brought tears to many eyes. The rôle of terrorist-in-chief is not calculated to make for personal affection or popularity. A Political Policeman's lot is decidedly not a happy one—a circumstance of which anyone envisaging a career in this field should take due account. There must, presumably, be one or two who will glance sadly, or at any rate thoughtfully, at the now empty desk in Lubianka where Beria used to sit, but the ordinary Muscovite is likely to derive a certain quiet satisfaction from the thought that the fate which Beria meted out to so many should now have befallen him.

Even over here the news of his downfall carries with it (apart from the larger bearing on the global cold war) some agreeable implications. One wonders, naturally, about the reaction among the editorial staff of Communist newspapers like the *Daily Worker*. These stalwart upholders of the Party line are seldom warned in advance of what is afoot, as we know from their wretched experiences at the time of the announcement of the Nazi-Soviet Pact. Like the rest of us they read on the tape that one of their heroes had "lost the features of a Communist and become transformed into a bourgeois renegade," as well as "an agent of international imperialism." Comment, in such a case, is far from easy, though doubtless, like everything else, it becomes easier with practice. This, heaven knows, they have been abundantly accorded.

Then there are our own Pundits—Slogger Crankshaw, Isaac Deutscher, old Uncle Franz Borkenau and all. They must to the task once more, sometimes, it has to be admitted, finding it necessary to beat a strategic retreat to hastily prepared positions. Have they said in the

ALAS, POOR BERIA

past that, with the death of Stalin, the phase of purges may be considered to be over? They have, and must now (happily with plenty of space at their disposal) unsay it. Have they even, in the reckless speculation induced by a total absence of verifiable facts, gone so far as to predict, following Stalin's personal rule, a period of government by committee, with Beria as the most influential committee-man? Unfortunately for them, they have.

In due course we will doubtless be properly instructed by these pundits. Meanwhile, two points arise, and may be stated irrespective of the learned and informed commentaries which will soon be plentifully forthcoming. The first concerns the activities as a wrecker and imperialist-capitalist agent, in which, we are now told, Beria has been engaged over a number of years. One had always thought of him as a not particularly likeable but decidedly able chap. That rather scholastic face, with rimless pince-nez surmounted by a domelike forehead, seemed to convey considerable intelligence. Now one has to admit

that he must have been little more than a dolt. He really seems to have made a very poor show indeed at handing Russia over to capitalist imperialism, especially in view of the great advantages he enjoyed as head of the Political Police and Stalin's right-hand man. Compared with what was achieved by, for instance, solitary Maquisades in France during the Nazi occupation, he has got nowhere at all. He may be a very fine Political Policeman, but as a saboteur he is negligible.

The second point is one that I personally have often puzzled over. In view of the very high mortality among Soviet and satellite Ministers, how comes it that candidates for these positions are never lacking? Speaking for myself, if to-morrow I received a telegram offering me the post of, say, Commissar for Heavy Industry in Bulgaria, it would not take a moment's reflection for me to decide that I preferred the relative obscurity of Bouverie Street. Yet, apparently, there are many who feel quite differently. The Commissariats never seem to fall into abeyance for lack of applicants.

Returning for a moment to editorialists on Communist newspapers, there is one possibility which would put into the shade all previous embarrassments they have experienced as a result of sudden policy and personnel changes in Moscow, and which may well have occurred to them at nightmarish moments. I refer, of course, to the possibility that Stalin himself may one day be posthumously disgraced and pronounced a lifelong enemy of the Soviet State. With Beria, the swathe of post-Stalinist purging is getting perilously near the Master. What adulation then would need to be unsaid! What an amazing reversal of judgments we then should be privileged to witness! I cannot help hoping it may happen, and if Malenkov should be deterred by finding difficulty in envisaging how, being dead, Stalin could be punished, I suggest he be removed from his place beside Lenin and buried in consecrated ground.

MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE





DINNER AT MALENKOV'S

THIS IS NEW YORK

IT is now some fifty years since anyone said to me "And what do you think of this great city?" —viz., New York. If the question were put to me to-day I would reply that New York is fine, but it would be even finer if there were perhaps a shade less crime going on round and about one. It has got so nowadays that practically everyone you meet is either coming away from sticking up a bank or just setting out to stick up a bank. These institutions seem to have a fascination for the criminal classes, attracting them much as catnip attracts cats.

A young man went into a bank the other day and asked to see the manager. Conducted into his office, he said he wanted a loan. "Ah, yes?" said the manager. "A loan, eh? Yes, yes, to be sure. And what is your occupation?" "I stick up banks," said the young man, producing a gun. The manager handed over \$204 without collateral or argument.

But the underworld is not hide-bound. It does not get into a rut. It prefers banks but is always ready to try a sideline, realizing that a change of occupation keeps a man fresh and alert. The liquor store a few blocks from where I reside has just been held up, also a hotel which is even nearer, and the other week my wife



was held up at a dressmaker's on Madison Avenue. She was in the middle of being fitted when a man came in brandishing a knife and asked for contributions. He collected eighteen dollars and disappeared into the void.

This seems to have been one of those routine business transactions, conducted—like conferences between statesmen—in a spirit of the utmost cordiality, but the proceedings at the hotel were very stirring. At half-past five in the morning a gang of six sauntered in with the idea of cracking the hotel safe, unaware that there was a cop on the premises having a

wash and brush-up in the basement. He emerged just as the intruders were telling the desk clerk to put his hands up, and started shooting in all directions. The gang started shooting back, and things were getting brisk, when more policemen arrived and eventually three of the marauders were captured on the roof and the other three in the beauty parlour.

"There was about a million bucks in the place, the way we had it figured," one of the bandits said as they were loading him into the wagon. "It's too bad," he added, probably clicking his tongue a bit, "that this young cop went and ruined everything."

They are very strong over here for what is known as the parole system. Some enterprising person is caught burgling a bank and sentenced to seven years in the coop. After about six months he is released on parole and goes off and burgle another bank. He then gets ten years, and six months later is again released on parole, when he immediately . . . But you get the idea. It must be a dog's life running a bank in these parts. Never a peaceful moment.

* * * * *

The next best way of making money in New York is to go into domestic service. There was a story in the paper not long ago of a man and his wife who came over from England some years ago and got a job as butler and cook at \$200 a month plus their board and lodging. They were able to salt away a hundred and fifty dollars each pay day. After they had been in this place for a while they accepted an offer from a wealthier family at \$300. This enabled them to put by \$250 a month.

About a year later their employer made the mistake of entertaining a Hollywood producer for the week-end and the producer was so struck by the couple's virtuosity that he lured them away with an offer of \$400, to include all expenses plus a car. They now banked \$350 a month. And when a rival producer tried to snatch them, the original producer raised their salary to \$500, at which figure





"Take a picture postcard, Miss Baxter . . . "

it remains at the moment of going to press. They now own an apartment house in Los Angeles.

We have had a series of blisters—both white and black—in our little home, each more incompetent than the last and each getting into our ribs for sixty dollars a week. Ninety per cent of them have been fiends in human shape, our star exhibit being dear old Horace, a coloured gentleman of lethargic disposition who scarcely moved except to steal our whisky when we were out. We had laid in a stock of Five Star Special for guests and an inferior brand for ourselves, and after it had been melting away for a week or two we confronted Horace.

"Horace," we said, "you have been stealing our Five Star Special and, what's more, you have also been stealing our —."

He gave us a look of contempt and disgust.

"Me?" he said. "I wouldn't

touch that stuff. I only drink Five Star Special."

Well, nice to think we had something he liked.

I heard of some people here who engaged a maid who had just come over from Finland. She seemed a nice girl and willing, but it turned out that there were chinks in her armour.

"How is your cooking?" they asked.

She said she couldn't cook. At home her mother had always done all the cooking.

"How about housework?"

No, she couldn't do housework. Back in Finland her aunt had attended to all that sort of thing. Nor could she look after children, her eldest sister's speciality.

"Well, what *can* you do?" they asked.

She thought for a moment.

"I can milk reindeer," she said brightly.

So if any of my readers can milk reindeer, let them come along. Fame and fortune await them.

P. G. WODEHOUSE

BEGUINE

WHEN they begin, like Neguib,
To turn on the heat, to blow on the ember,
It's a technique we sadly remember—
Others began like Neguib.

MARK BEVAN

SELF-HELP WITHOUT SMILES

IT was in the best progressive tradition of the *Express* newspaper group that the *Evening Standard* secured, last week, the high privilege of reprinting parts of Lord Beaverbrook's famous best-seller, *Success*. The idea must have struck many as inspired. And we can only guess at the obstacles that had to be overcome—fierce rival bidding from the *Daily Mail* springs to mind—before the *Standard* finally wrung consent from its controlling shareholder.

The work was written thirty-two years ago, and copies are no doubt marked "rare" in booksellers' catalogues. I have no recollection of ever having seen one. A reason for this is hinted at in the publisher's foreword to a later edition—"large business firms were buying up copies wholesale and distributing them to their staffs": the recipients must still have them, tucked at the back of their ledger-desks, brought out for periodic reading to see where they went wrong.

The shrewdness of these open-handed executives, incidentally, bears out Lord Beaverbrook's insistence on Judgment as the primary ingredient of Success. They knew, when they handed their employees the secret of getting to the top, that they would never, somehow, get there. Lord Beaverbrook's judgment is clearly no less reliable. Otherwise, by this time, there would be Beaverbrooks on all sides—conducting buses, shovelling coal, waiting in the restaurants and writing for weekly journals. This, of course, would be ludicrous.

Another thing which may have made me miss this slim but fiery volume—124 pp., large type—was my age. I was only eleven when it came out, and my literature was

closely supervised. The *Magnet* and *Boys' Own Paper* were thought less disturbing, perhaps, than the gleaming incitements of Lord Beaverbrook. "Money," he writes—"the word has a magical sound. It conjures up before the vision some kind of enchanted Paradise where to wish is to have—an Aladdin's lamp brought down to earth." This sort of thing, apart from prompting awkward questions about where Aladdin's lamp was ordinarily situated, could soon have led to a series of mysterious thefts from the locker-room.

No, *Success* was for man's estate. The author's indictment of sport, just and wise to the grown-up, could only anger and confuse the adolescent mind. "The career of sport leads only to failure," he says, after briefly lauding Mr. Bonar Law's ineptitude on the tennis-court. "The hero of the playing-field becomes the dunce of the office." These would be hard words for a lad who, given the choice of being Len Hutton or Lord Beaverbrook, would not, very probably, wait for the end of the sentence.

The whole handling of this indispensable vade-mecum has worked out awkwardly for me. Too young to benefit in 1921, I now find myself, in 1953, too old. Even if I started to-morrow, and concentrated all my powers on getting Aladdin's lamp down to earth, I could never hope to catch up with the man who, at my age, was already successful enough to tell other men how to do it. "I once took the chairmanship of a bank," he was murmuring reminiscently in 1921. And here am I, past forty, and never taken anything of the kind. I suspect that it is too late.

And yet, is it? Perhaps there is still time to make the first



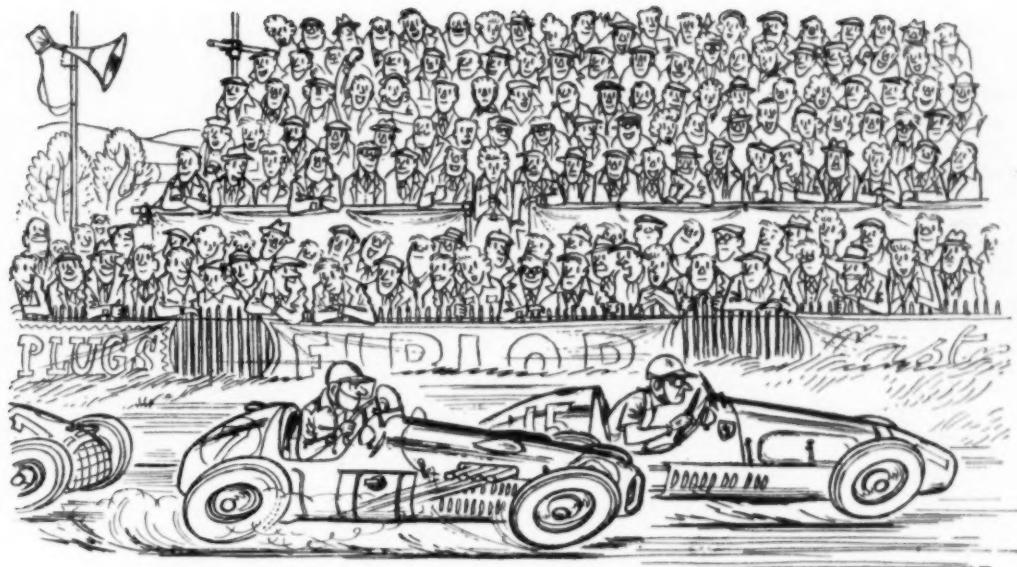
ten thousand. Lord Beaverbrook attaches a lot of importance to the first ten thousand. Looking back over my life so far, I realize that half my troubles are due to the failure to surmount this elementary hurdle. Once you've scraped the first ten thousand together, you're all right; the other noughts will scurry up merrily and tack themselves on like fragments of quicksilver to the parent body.

Perhaps I'd better try. I don't want to be a failure, like Mr. Beverley Baxter. In his introduction to last week's series Lord Beaverbrook gave Mr. Beverley Baxter a sharp talking-to. It was no good being an M.P., and the editor of the *Sunday Express*, and a brilliant dramatic critic, and the most popular journalist in Canada, he said, if you failed to enrich the nation simply because of an immoderate addiction to golf and Canasta. This was certainly an object-lesson to me, and I'm right off golf and Canasta from now on. (I don't know whether Mr. Beverley Baxter has dipped into *Success* lately; there's a pleasing passage in which the author warns against offending people. Long afterwards you may find yourself saying "Why did this man hit me suddenly from the dark?")

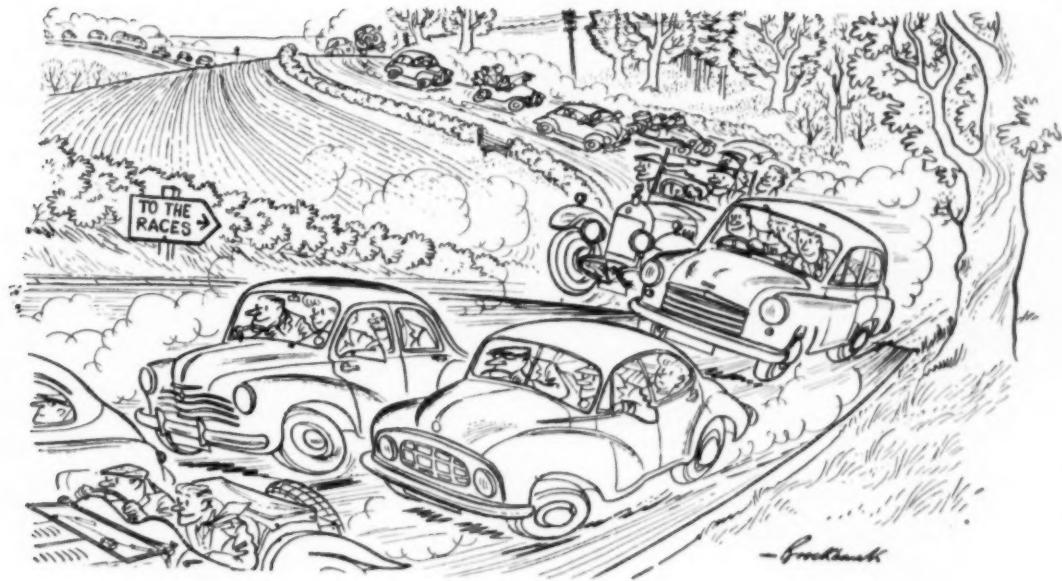
Another example of an easy mistake to make is given by Lord Beaverbrook from his own experience in the same introduction. It was to do with Stanley Baldwin and Empire Free Trade. "I blame my own political judgment," says his Lordship, with almost childlike honesty, "for the trust I placed in that man." Another object-lesson, that. I'm right off trusting politicians.

All in all, as I say, the *Evening Standard* is to be thanked and congratulated. Readers who recall that the original book was a collection of articles first published in the *Sunday Express* will welcome their appearance in article form; if some enterprising publisher would now collect them into a book again, perhaps Lord Beaverbrook could be persuaded to allow excerpts to appear, in article form, in the *Daily Express*? He's a hard nut to crack, but it would be worth trying.

J. B. BOOTHROYD



Motor racing, to the British, seems to be just another spectator sport . . .



. . . until immediately afterwards, anyway.

Very, Very Quietly

HISTORIANS will probably agree in placing the inception of the Pyrwhitt-Robinson Method as far back as 1925, when it fell to Pyrwhitt-Robinson, as Head of the School, to introduce a visiting lecturer—an explorer described in the announcement of his lecture as "the first man to enter Lhasa in disguise."

The hall buzzed with interested anticipation. Pyrwhitt-Robinson, already imbued with that dislike of sensationalism, that instinct for calming things down, which was later to dominate his life, introduced the explorer with the remark that "although, of course, a great many people have been to Lhasa, I believe I am correct in saying that our speaker to-night was the first to do so in *disguise*."

Everyone, except possibly the lecturer, calmed down immediately.

It was a promising beginning, but not until some years later, when he entered journalism, did Pyrwhitt-Robinson embark methodically upon the development of his plan for keeping people calm no matter what. (He was, at this outset of his career, a sub-editor on a newspaper having its offices not, as they say, a hundred miles from Printing House Square; and in saying this they are correct, since the offices were right in Printing House Square.)

Pyrwhitt-Robinson had already formulated the view that most of the trouble is caused by people going about trying to make things sound exciting. What was wanted, he said, was the Sedative Approach.

With a view to training a basic *cadre* of Sedatives, he organized among his fellow sub-editors a nightly competition of which the

prize-winner was he who could produce the least exciting headline to be actually printed in the paper the following morning.

"Small Earthquake in Chile. Not Many Dead," was an early success of Pyrwhitt-Robinson himself. On the other hand, his headline on the outbreak of the Abyssinian War—"Dispute in N.E. Africa. Differences of Opinion Grow"—was altered at the last moment by a Sensationalist Chief sub-editor. (So was the work of one of his pupils, who wanted to cut out part of some dispatch about the "Munich Crisis" in favour of a quiet story called "Fewer Rabbits in Australia.")

Following a series of such clashes with the Sensationalists, Pyrwhitt-Robinson transferred his services to another newspaper. Possibly owing to confusion caused by the first "Blitz" on London ("Blitz" was, of course, a word absolutely barred by Pyrwhitt-Robinson), he had the pleasure of seeing his headline on that event run right through the early edition. "Explosives Dropped from Flying Machines," it announced: "Unusual Experience at London Docks."

Later, work as a war correspondent afforded him considerable scope. In the London office of the paper he then worked for they will long remember the opening words of his first, eagerly-awaited dispatch from France after D-Day. "A good many British and Americans in their characteristic uniforms," wrote Pyrwhitt-Robinson, "are in Normandy this afternoon, most of them having come here by boat."

His editor thought at first the censors had gone crazy, and made a frightful scene about it with the Minister of Information. But Pyrwhitt-Robinson was able to explain that he had simply felt that this was the kind of story which might definitely excite people unless handled very, very quietly.

Reluctantly relinquishing war correspondence soon after this episode, he gained employment with a provincial newspaper in time to deal with the news of the fall of Berlin and the death of Hitler. "Change of Government in Germany. Cabinet-making under Difficulties,"



was felt to mark a milestone in the progress of the Pyrwhitt-Robinson Method.

Harassed as he was by the Sensationalists, Pyrwhitt-Robinson moved from post to post rather frequently, but a glance at the local newspaper in this or that section of the provinces would often reveal his hand steadily at work, keeping things absolutely calm.

When other newspapers were screaming "Tornado Sweeps Florida" or "Dictator Threatens Britain's Meat Ration," it was soothing to come across—in some publication from the Lake District or East Anglia—the Pyrwhitt-Robinson touch: "Winds Strong in Part of U.S.A." or "Exaggerated Reports About Meat."

In his privately-printed Sedative Sub-Editor's vade-mecum, Pyrwhitt-Robinson lists a number of "preferred phrases," handy alternatives to the over-stimulants used by the Sensationalists. Thus for "Heat Wave," the phrase "Warm Weather" or "Higher Temperatures at Kew" should always be substituted. "Record Crowds Storm Lords" should read: "Many People at London Cricket Ground." Words like "crash," "slump," "boom" and "crisis" are best, says Pyrwhitt-Robinson, avoided altogether.

Having inherited a small legacy, Pyrwhitt-Robinson became, earlier this year, Editor-Proprietor of a newspaper in the west country with a circulation of several hundreds weekly, thus at length shaking off the trammels of the Sensationalists. There has already been interested comment on his treatment of what some of his contemporaries referred to excitedly as the Christie Case, or the House of Death. "Conditions in Notting Hill, Police Officers Interested" was how Pyrwhitt-Robinson presented the affair. "Prominent People at Island Resort" was judged to be a particularly calming headline on the Bermuda Conference.

In a recent interview with a student of journalism which Pyrwhitt-Robinson spared no effort to make as dull as possible, he disclosed that he envisages a broad extension of the Method. "The new journalism," he stated, "should not confine itself to

keeping absolutely calm about what are called the Big News Events of the day. The world situation being what it is, there is always the risk of sensationalism creeping in nevertheless.

"My aim will be to give these events the minimum possible publicity. In future I shall relegate all political events, also fires (unless very small), storms, record-breaking jet-flights and crime waves—which, by the way, I prefer to think of as Several Non-Legal Acts—to the back pages, or at least to low positions on the front page.

"The habit of the Sensationalists is to seek for events implying movement and what they call 'drama.' I, on the other hand, shall concentrate on publishing news indicating stability and what I may term 'non-occurrence.' Thus, I have a reporter at work just now on a story showing that the amount the tide rises and falls along this part of the coast has not varied significantly for several hundred years, and is unlikely to do so in the future. I propose to follow this with news that the coast is not, on the one hand, being eroded, nor the sea, on the other, receding. Everything is staying in the same place.

"We shall also publish a series of photographs of quite average-sized tomatoes—not huge, and not especially small; just average."

The student of journalism was scribbling like anything in his notebook. "But this," he gasped, "will revolutionize journalism."

Pyrwhitt-Robinson raised a deprecating hand. "Please," he said, "don't write anything of that kind. Say, if you must . . ."—he paused, seeking the turn of phrase that would leave people absolutely calm—"say that I may possibly be planning a paper which will not be quite the same as some existing papers, perhaps."

CLAUD COCKBURN

2 2

Play!

The sun broke through just as shining quite brightly when Bedser walked out wearing newly-laundered white coats and it was the umpires, Lee and Baldwin, bowled the first ball of the match to Australia's captain."

Torquay Herald Express



PARROTS AT STRASBOURG

AS I have already said, my parrot, Tomkinson, has behind him more than a century of experience and is also especially interested in foreign affairs. Therefore, since it is the custom of the Council of Europe at Strasbourg that delegates, when they do not find it convenient themselves to be present at a debate, can be represented by a substitute, it was natural enough that I should take Tomkinson with me as my substitute to the recent meeting of the Council.

The Maison de l'Europe, in which the Council's debates take place, is, as it happens, exceptionally convenient for parrots. Each of the delegates has his seat in the hemicycle behind a desk, and on each desk is a microphone. For whatever purpose that microphone may have been designed, it is singularly well suited for a parrot's perch. The

parrot can speak from his perch. Such of his remarks as he wishes to remain inaudible can readily be discharged into the ambient air, while, if he wishes to deliver a message to the waiting world, nothing is easier than to bend down and speak into the amplifying microphone. There is also a convenient bar and plenty of rain-water attached.

Nevertheless I am afraid that for all that Tomkinson was not impressed with the proceedings. The meeting had been specially arranged in order to debate the European situation, and parrots and human beings had been assembled at some inconvenience from fifteen of the countries of Europe to take part in the debate. But, when we got there, it was found that there was a general feeling that the European situation had now grown so critical that it would be dangerous to talk about it.

"If we were to have a debate," I explained to Tomkinson, "there is a great risk that some opinions might be expressed which differ from other opinions and that might be embarrassing to the policies of the Governments of the European countries. We only ought to have a debate when we are quite certain that there are no differences of opinion."

"But have the European countries got any policies?" asked Tomkinson.

"Some of the European countries have Governments," I explained, "and others of them have policies. We must take the rough with the smooth."

"But I thought," said Tomkinson, "that it was the idea of the Council of Europe that unofficial politicians might have advice that is valuable to give to the Governments on what is taking place."

"Yes," I said, "but it is thought more valuable that they only give that advice after it has taken place."

Tomkinson did not agree with me, and he and the other parrots got together and pressed their point so strongly that eventually it was agreed that it would be a good thing to have a debate after all, but by then it was not possible to find a day

on which all the human beings could be present. The Germans all had to be in Germany on Thursday, the French all had to be in France on Friday, the English all had to be in England on Saturday. The Turks made it clear that once they went away nothing on earth would induce them to come back again. The Italians had not come anyway.

"But," said Tomkinson, "I do not understand. All these other engagements were well known weeks ago. If everybody knew that the human beings would not be able to be present for the debate, why did they ever summon them to Strasbourg to have the debate?"

"Oh, they like coming," I said, "and they like going away again. Human beings are like that."

"Yes, I know they do," said Tomkinson, "but parrots are busy birds, and does it really seriously matter whether the human beings are there for the debate or not? Would it not be really better for the parrots just to discuss it all among themselves?"

"I remember," he continued, in reminiscent mood, "that, when I was at the Congress of Berlin, what we did was this. We parrots all got together beforehand and settled exactly what should be done, and then, when everything was arranged, we let the human beings in—one was called Beaconsfield, I seem to remember, and another, I think, was called Bismarck—and let them make some speeches to one another just for fun."

"But what was the point of the speeches if everything was all arranged already?" I asked.

"Oh, I don't know," said Tomkinson, "but human beings are like that. Human beings are quite different from parrots. You see, parrots have reason and think things out, but human beings just like making speeches and repeating themselves, and making other human beings cheer them. I'm sure I don't know why, but, if you were as old as I am, you would know that there is nothing for it but to take them as they are."





"You can always find money for this sort of thing, but you can't give me a bit extra for housekeeping!"

"Now the trouble with this Council of Europe is that its business is all arranged by something called the Bureau. And on the Bureau they have human beings. So naturally nothing is ever thought out. It's a fatal mistake. Much the same mistake was made at Geneva, and look what a fiasco it proved. In the end it was found that the only thing was to leave it to the parrots, and it will be the same at Strasbourg.

"In fact," he said, "I think that human beings have a great deal too much say in the affairs of the world. Declaration of *human* rights, indeed! What do men think that they are coming to? Napoleon was a sensible man. He never dreamed of confiding in anybody but his horse—and he didn't do too badly for a time."

CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS

BLACK FOISON

THE more the wealth, the more the cares.
Apart from conscience' prick,
Stocks must be watched, and so must shares . . .
Black-currants one must pick.

Jewels, at grave cost, must be insured;
Bankers may be assailed;
Rich heiresses must be immured . . .
Black-currants topped and tailed.

Fat pocket-books misshape the suit;
Tiaras hurt the head . . .
Bottling some hundredweights of fruit
Keeps husbands from their bed.

Surtax, kind surtax, may relieve
The rich; kind friends may cheat them . . .
From currants there is no reprieve—
Finally one must eat them.

JUSTIN RICHARDSON

Light Music Seriously

MY OWN CONTRIBUTIONS



NOW arrive at the moment when, willy-nilly, I must discuss, as objectively as possible, my own contributions to the field of light music. I have, within the last twenty-five years, composed many successful songs and three integrated scores of which I am genuinely proud. These are *Bitter Sweet*, *Conversation Piece* and *Pacific 1860*. *This Year of Grace* and *Words and Music*, although revues, were also well constructed musically. *Operette* was sadly meagre with the exception of three numbers, "Dearest Love," "Where are the Songs we Sung" and "The Stately Homes of England." This latter, however, being a comedy quartet, relied for its success more on its lyrics than its tune.

Ace of Clubs contained several good songs, but could not fairly be described as a musical score. *Sigh No More*, *On With the Dance* and *London Calling* are outside this discussion as they were revues containing contributions from other

composers. *Bitter Sweet*, the most flamboyantly successful of all my musical shows, had a full and varied score greatly enhanced by the orchestrations of Orrelana. *Conversation Piece* was less full and varied but had considerable quality.

With these two scores Miss Elsie April, to whom I dictated them, was a tremendous help to me both in transcribing and in sound musical advice. *Pacific 1860* was, musically, my best work to date. It was carefully balanced and well constructed and imaginatively orchestrated by Ronald Binge and Mantovani. The show, as a whole, was a failure. It had been planned on a small scale, but, owing to theatre exigencies and other circumstances, had to be blown up to fit the stage of Drury Lane. The Press blasted the book, hardly mentioned the music or lyrics, and that was that. It closed after a few months.

Proceeding on the assumption that the reader is interested in the development of my musical talent, I will try to explain, as concisely as I can, how, in this respect, my personal wheels go round. To begin with, I have only had two music lessons in my life. These were the first steps of what was to have been a full course at the Guildhall School of Music and they faltered and stopped when I was told by my instructor that I could not use consecutive fifths.

He went on to explain that a gentleman called Ebenezer Prout had announced many years ago that consecutive fifths were wrong and must in no circumstances be employed. At that time Ebenezer Prout was merely a name to me (as a matter of fact he still is, and a very funny one at that) and I was unimpressed by his Victorian dicta. I argued back that Debussy and Ravel used consecutive fifths frequently. My instructor waved aside this triviality with a pudgy hand, and I left his presence for ever with the parting shot that what was good enough for Debussy and Ravel was good enough for me.



"Consecutive fifths are wrong . . ."

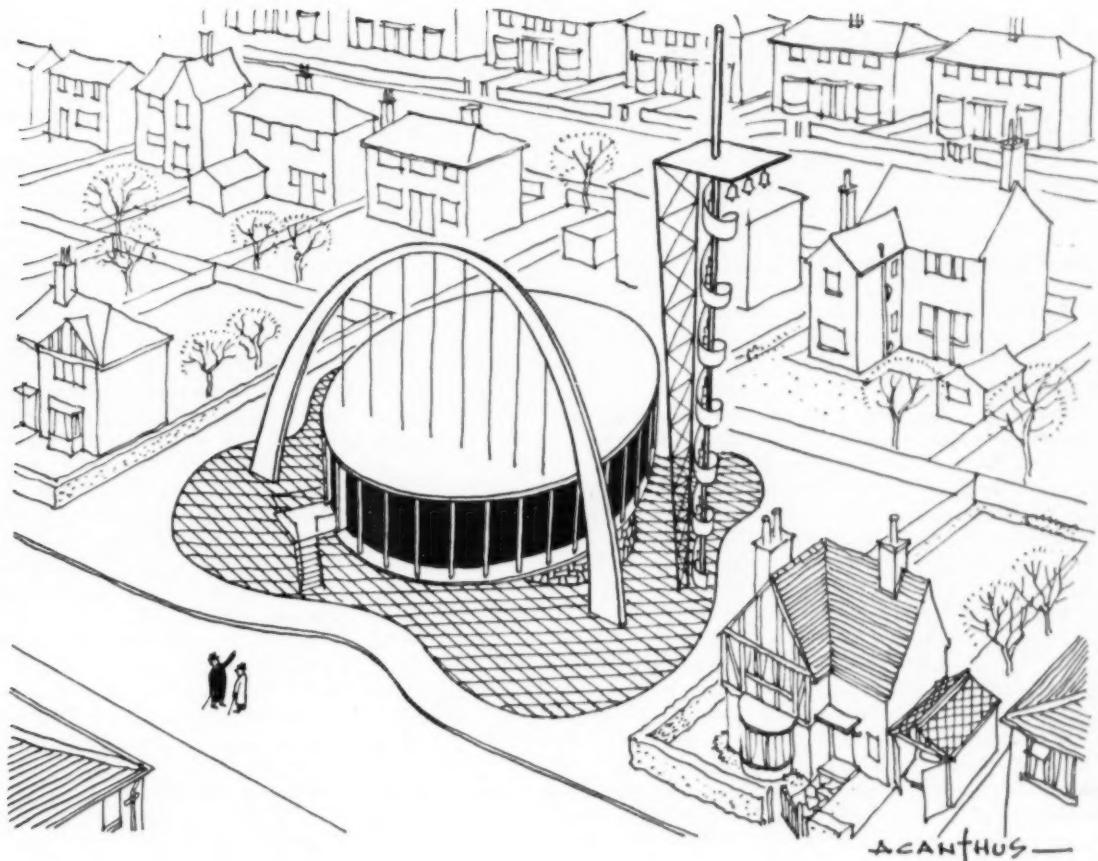
This outburst of rugged individualism deprived me of much valuable knowledge, and I have never deeply regretted it for a moment. Had I intended at the outset of my career to devote all my energies to music I would have endured the necessary training cheerfully enough, but in those days I was passionately involved in the theatre; acting and writing and singing and dancing seemed of more value to my immediate progress than counterpoint and harmony. I was willing to allow the musical side of my creative talent to take care of itself.

On looking back, I think that on the whole I was right. I have often been irritated in later years by my inability to write music down effectively and by my complete lack of knowledge of orchestration except by ear, but being talented from the very beginning in several different media, I was forced by common sense to make a decision. The decision I made was to try to become a good writer and actor, and to compose tunes and harmonies whenever the urge to do so became too powerful to resist.

I have never been unduly depressed by the fact that all my music



"The oboe was playing A flat instead of A natural . . ."



"They wanted to erect a factory, but fortunately Vicar got his own way."

has to be dictated. Many famous light composers never put so much as a crotchet on paper. To be born with a natural ear for music is a great and glorious gift. It is no occasion for pride and it has nothing to do with will-power, concentration or industry. It is either there or it isn't. What is so curious is that it cannot, in any circumstances, be wrong where one's own harmonies are concerned. Last year in New York when I was recording *Conversation Piece* with Lily Pons, I detected a false note in the orchestration. It happened to be in a very fully scored passage and the mistake was consequently difficult to trace. The orchestrator, the conductor and the musical producer insisted that I was wrong; only Lily

Pons, who has perfect pitch, backed me up. Finally, after much argument and fiddle-faddle, it was discovered that the oboe was playing an A flat instead of an A natural.

The greatness and gloriousness of this gift, however, can frequently be offset by excruciating discomfort. On many occasions in my life I have had to sit smiling graciously while some well-meaning but inadequate orchestra obliges with a selection from my works. Cascades of wrong notes lacerate my nerves, a flat wind instrument pierces my ear-drums, and though I continue to smile appreciatively, the smile, after a little while, becomes tortured and looks as if my mouth were filled with lemon juice.

NOËL COWARD

89

GENIUS LOCI

I AM the man you pick
From all the random runners
in the rain;
I am the man whose quick
Bright eye suggests the keen,
incisive brain,
Who wears one of those smiles
That lame dogs look for when
approaching stiles,
Whose shoulder aches, you feel,
To lend its strength to someone
else's wheel.
You hail me with relief;
You run towards me with your
little map—
In brief
I am a stranger here myself, old
chap.

D. MATTAM

Bobby Locke on Golf

BIG golf is a performance with no footlights between actors and audience. The barriers imposed by stewards are at the best incomplete, since the scene of play is always changing; and the self-imposed barrier of good manners, on the part of the audience, is subject to collapse at any moment owing to the desire to miss nothing or to see better than one's neighbour.

Even so, when we contemplate in retrospect charming, sunlit, tournament scenes at Deal, Wentworth, or wherever the memory lights, with gaily clad bronzed players sauntering through the crowds to make, without apparent effort, one good shot after another, it is difficult to realize the amount of strain, and commotion, which lies beneath the surface.

Lacking then, as a protection to their feelings, footlights and make-up, golfers have been forced to adopt, as camouflage, the "poker-face." This may be described as a development of the facial expression of gentlemanly boredom which the English public schoolboy once wore, but I think wears no more, during all pursuits pleasurable or not, thereby often defeating efforts for his entertainment or distraction.

Cotton and Locke both advocate the use of the poker-face in big golf; Locke's mastery of it may be shown by the recital of an incident at which I was privileged to assist, in the

French or passive sense. It was at Moor Park last year. There is a phrase used from time to time by golf journalists, "Luckily the ball struck a spectator and bounced back into play." On this occasion the ball had been heading out-of-bounds towards a road. The "striker" in the dual sense was Locke.

As usual, by the mercy of the gods, the stricken spectator, this time a lady, was not hurt, only shaken, and perhaps a little overawed at suddenly becoming the centre of attention. After an interval, walking at his regulation slow pace, appeared on the scene the great man himself, calm and inscrutable.

Of course, as soon as he knew the situation, and had had the victim pointed out, a great change took place: he dropped his poker-face, and with the utmost charm tendered apologies and condolences. At this point, he seemed to have forgotten all about his match, and the heavy commitments going with it. The next moment, the episode being closed with smiles all round, down came the visor of the poker-face, and the ball was smacked on to the green, a good 200 yards away.

Under the heading "The Psychology of Golf," in his book *Bobby Locke on Golf* (Country Life Ltd., 25/-), Bobby Locke deals with concentration, relaxation, and the cold war of professional golf, as waged on different continents. To the more prosaic term "will to win," he prefers "killer-instinct." A close-up of himself about to "kill" poor Harry Bradshaw during the play-off of the Open Championship of 1946 illustrates a small chapter devoted to this theme.

As an Open Champion, and a prince of the game, his long memory of past slights and contretemps may seem a little ungracious. However they all come as grist to his mill and as a boost to his "killer" side. I confess I found them amusing reading. One trembles to think what amount of "killer-instinct" would have been unleashed had he been kept waiting for two hours at

the tee, before a challenge match, by the great Walter Hagen, who, having overslept on such an occasion, is reputed to have ambled on to the course remarking "to hurry would be bad for golf."

For bed-time browsing, or chatting over drinks, there are two most suitable chapters, "My Ideal Golfer," and "My Ideal Golf Course." The first is composed of 15 different players, and the latter of 18 holes taken from different courses; both illustrated by photographs.

The camera, although immensely helpful to the student of golf-strokes and players, is not equally successful with regard to courses. As is shown in this book, the pin and green, usually easily picked out in the distance by the naked eye under normal conditions, are frequently invisible in photographs; while both greens and fairways seem unnaturally wide and flat.

Whatever impression the book makes, it will not be that "there is always room at the top"! Few parents after reading it will want their sons to become professionals. Locke was lucky in having sympathetic ones; but you can divine that for him, in any case, the end would have been the same.

Bobby Locke, besides giving a very clear exposition of his own strokes, gives, less consciously, a fairly good idea of himself as a character. His candour and slight lack of humour here stand him in good stead. He is beyond diffidence, but cannot be called conceited, since he only claims for himself what we all know to be true, that he is a top golfer.

He started swinging some form of club when hardly out of the cradle—and he admits that the whole business taxes him severely, even now that he is at the height of his success.

His secret, apart from his hard work and utter devotion, lies, I believe, in some extra nervous sensitivity which he commands, and by which agency he produces those diabolically accurate little shots, on or round the green, at critical moments, to the anguish of his opponents and joy of his admirers.

ADRIAN DAINTREY





IM PENITENCE

ALL the world's wiseacres in arms against them
Shan't detach my heart for a single moment
From the man-like beasts of the earthy stories—
Badger or Moly.

Rat the oarsman, neat Mrs. Tiggy Winkle,
Benjamin, pert Nutkin, or (ages older)
Henryson's shrill Mouse, or the Mice the Frogs once
Fought with in Homer.

Not that I'm so craz'd as to think the creatures
Do behave that way, nor at all deluded
By some half-false sweetness of early childhood
Sharply remembered.

Look again. Look well at the beasts, the true ones.
Can't you see? . . . cool primness of cats, or coney's
Half indignant stare of amazement, mouse's
Twinkling adroitness,

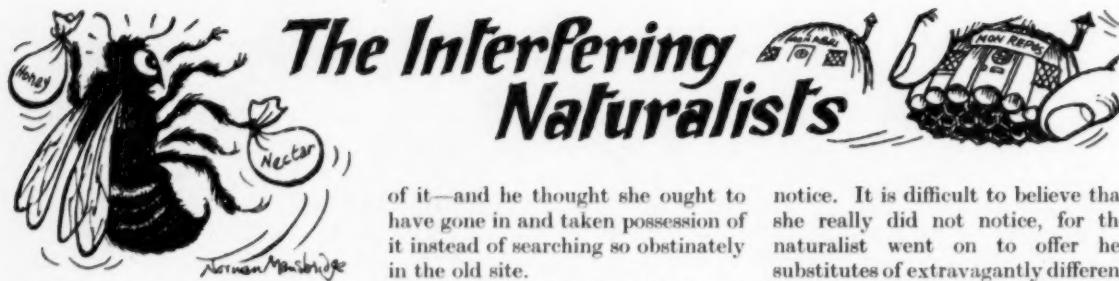
Topsy bear's rotundity, toad's complacence . . .
Why! they all cry out to be used as symbols,
Masks for Man, cartoons, parodies by Nature
Formed to reveal us



Each to each, not fiercely but in her gentlest
Vein of household laughter. And if the love so
Raised—it will, no doubt—splashes over on the
Actual archetypes,

Who's the worse for that? Marry, gup! Begone, you
Fusty kill-joys, new Manichaens! Here's a
Health to Toad Hall, here's to the Beaver doing
Sums with the Butcher! N. W.





The Interfering Naturalists

THE interfering pranks of naturalists must cause a great deal of worry to the puzzled birds and beasts on whom they practise their ingenuity. One wonders what the poor creatures make of it all—disappearing houses, disappearing prey, dead victims restored to most embarrassing life, and a series of practical jokes played on their sex lives.

Disappearing houses must be upsetting enough. One naturalist apparently had great sport teasing some unfortunate bees with this trick. He picked on the kind of solitary bee which builds and provisions a fairly elaborate nest before laying her egg in it. One of these bees went off unsuspectingly to work one morning—that is, she went off to gather nectar and pollen for her nest—and returned after a short interval to find her nest no longer there.

The poor bee simply could not believe her eyes. She went on searching for hours and hours in the place where she had last seen it and kept coming back over and over again to make *quite* sure that she was not dreaming. The naturalist was very contemptuous of her because her nest was near at hand—indeed she often passed within a few inches

of it—and he thought she ought to have gone in and taken possession of it instead of searching so obstinately in the old site.

But surely she was behaving as a conscientious bee with a proper respect for the rights of property? If we returned home one night and found that our house had removed itself without a trace, we might well hesitate to take possession of an exactly similar one in the next street. Like the bee, we should surely think "It is like mine, but I *know* I never built a house there!"

Poor bee! What she really thought—if she thought at all—must remain a mystery, but at the least she must have been annoyed, for in the end she flew away and began building all over again. Even now, however, she could not count on her house behaving itself on conventional lines, for the naturalist's next idea was to remove it while she was away and put a different one in exactly the same place. What *was* she to think? Whatever she may have thought, the naturalist was as irritated as ever by what she did, for when she went inside and behaved exactly as usual, he decided that she was stupid.

But why? In similar circumstances we should find it at the least a little embarrassing to run in next door exclaiming "What *do* you think? My house has completely disappeared and there's a different one standing there in its place." No—like the bee, we should probably pretend not to

notice. It is difficult to believe that she really did not notice, for the naturalist went on to offer her substitutes of extravagantly different appearance and size. Sometimes she would discover her house grown to twice the size in her absence, sometimes shrunk to a half; a circumstance not lightly to be overlooked. What a life she led! She can never have had an idea what she would find when she got home.

However, she had nothing to put up with compared to those creatures whose sex life has attracted the interest of naturalists. Birds have provided them with good opportunities in this direction, largely because they are often so surprisingly vague about which *is* the opposite sex. A spot of paint dabbed on, or a few feathers plucked out and they seem completely at sea. The male Flicker Bird, for instance, is chiefly distinguished from the female by his luxuriant moustache. Clearly no keen naturalist could be expected to resist a temptation like that. In no time they had a fine false moustache firmly glued to the beak of an otherwise respectable wife and mother.

The result was dramatic, if not unexpected. Her husband—a right-minded bird—instantly threw her out of the nest. She then became the recipient of embarrassing attentions from other females, and her own timid attempts at interesting the males met with a distinctly cold



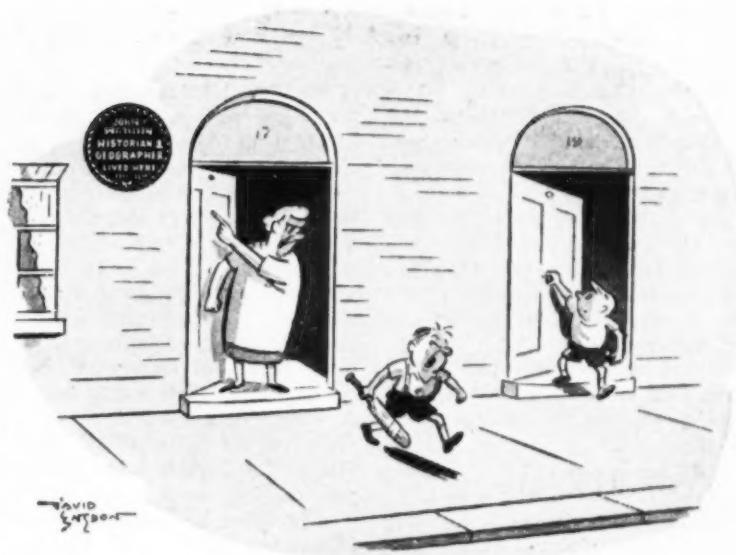
reception, if not outright attack. Life must have seemed very confusing to her.

However, this story has a happy ending, for the moustache was finally removed and she was restored to her rightful husband.

The male locust had a still more humiliating experience at the hands of naturalists. His sex appeal apparently depends entirely on his song, which he produces by vibrating his wings. This could, of course, be frustrated by gluing them together. Once thought of, the idea was irresistible. Some locusts were captured and their wings firmly glued so that they were powerless to move them. The result was what might have been expected and pleased the naturalists, if not the locusts. "They were quite unable to attract a single female," they record with unfeeling triumph. One hopes, but with no great optimism, that they remembered to wash the glue off their wings before proceeding to their next victim.

This was the Grayling Butterfly. This decorative creature performs an elaborate courtship display before the female of his choice which reaches its climax in an elegant bow. This is no idle flourish, but has practical purpose behind it. The male Grayling carries a scent organ on his forewing, and when he bows he manages to thrust it, as it were, right under the female's nose; or, to be more exact, he catches her antennae, which serve her for nose, between his wings. The scent thus wafted to her is apparently quite irresistible and he has no more trouble with his suit.

Affairs, however, go very differently if his scent organ is taken from him. They can hardly, in fact, be



"Nag, nag, nag—homework, homework, homework!"

said to go at all. "In spite of intensive courting," brutally observe the naturalists, "he has great difficulty in acquiring a mate." If he does so, it is no thanks to the naturalists but to his own enterprise and initiative. These handicapped males sometimes learn to stand craftily by while another male is doing his courting, and then, at the very last moment, when the female is bemused and bewildered by the intoxicating perfume, they jump in and take the place of the successful suitor. It is not known whether the female notices this last-minute substitution or not.

Birds, insects, reptiles—all the smaller animals have suffered in much the same way, and one shudders to think of the psychological

traumata naturalists may be inflicting by their merry pranks. Does the Grayling Butterfly think, like the girl in the advertisement, "I used to be attractive . . . What is it about me now?" And his best friends are hardly in a position to tell him. A severe neurosis would seem the very least he might expect. One begins to understand why naturalists cling so firmly, so indignantly, so angrily even, to their often-expressed conviction that animals do not, *cannot*, think.

NESTA PAIN

"THIS DISH WILL MAKE YOU LIKE COD"
Daily Telegraph headline

See you on the slab.



THE Harrovians were arriving conscientiously early; the Etonians fashionably late. The news-stands were hawking lunch editions proclaiming "Beria the Traitor" for Trial . . . Beria accused of plot to seize power." But they were regarded with indifference. There is, after all, not cricket and not cricket. This was the annual show of the British county families, and it was important to get a good place early, by the side of the show ring.

"If we can get across to the other side, with our backs against the railings, we shall see absolutely everyone as they pass."

A bishop and his stall-mate hobbled past, laden with a packing-case filled with ginger-ale, to water their young. Others, for all their finery, carried grips and suitcases filled with food, or had lobsters borne before them on platters by hired family butlers, towards coaches and carriages hired from East End liverymen.

By midday the parade round the show-ring had thickened: Old Harrovians nourished on the lush pastures of the City, Old Etonians nourished on the pastures, to-day hardly less lush, of the Shires. From paddock and stable, throughout town and country, they had emerged, finely groomed, to show themselves off before their kind.



"Green peas, new potatoes, mint sauce and ewe, green peas, new potatoes, mint sauce and ewe, green peas . . ."

NOT CRICKET

Swallow-tailed sires had crowned their heads with grey tall hats or, if Scots, with black ones, equally serviceable for funerals. An actor sported a fancy waistcoat; an Old Wykehamist a soft green hat. Hardly a spat was to be seen. The heads of organdie-skirted dams luxuriated with hot-house blooms and fruits, or were planted closely with bedding-plants and blossom; while the diamond badges of innumerable regiments adorned their modest breasts. A single cloche tolled away, as though at the behest of Mr. Angus Wilson. A French lady, prepared *pour le sport*, wore tartan tweeds.

The fillies, long-legged like their fathers, wore glad rags too. The colts, cherubic like their mothers, were more subdued and serious. No longer are they miniature dandies, with gold-knobbed canes and flowered waistcoats. Discreet, tall-hatless, lounge-suited, with rolled umbrellas, they are miniature City gents, looking to a uniform future, Harrow differing from Eton only as the corn-flower differs from the carnation dipped in pale blue ink. Some even gave unconvincing impersonations of private soldiers in the Brigade of Guards.

Meanwhile, on an ample lawn ringed by empty stands, thirteen chosen youths, with two bats and a ball, performed an elegant ritual unobserved, disturbing only the pigeons and sparrows which pecked at the turf around them.

Soon it was feeding-time for the county families too. In show-tents marked, for the various species, Eton and Harrow, Carlton and Cavalry, Bucks and Greenjackets, they ate the salmon they catch in their rivers and the raspberries they grow in their kitchen gardens. Afterwards *La Ronde* became more garulous. There was amiable neighing and whinnying at the encounter of friends. There was fraternization among the old, who had too much, and the young, who had too little, to say to each other. There were greetings.

"Haven't seen you for how many years?"

"I really don't like to think . . ." "Doubt if we shall meet again." "Doubt it . . ."

There were inquiries. "Is she still alive?"

"Yes. In a home, of course."

He's eighty not out . . ."

There were invitations.

"We can easily cram you all in . . ."

There were exchanges of information.

"Bracken's the answer."

"How about sawdust? It's good for lilies . . ."

"He's the one and only Harrovian Socialist."

"Why do they join them?"

"They think it's better to be placed in a selling-plate than be also ran in a classic . . ."

During a break in the ritual they swarmed on to the lawn, scattering the pigeons and sparrows, and at the sound of a bell were gently herded back, with a rope, to the show ring.

"I'm looking for a place out of the sun for my wife . . ."

"None of the boys seem to like him . . ."

" . . . wearing a suit he bought off an Eton master for two guineas . . ."

"She will insist on watching the cricket."

"Such a bore, one keeps on meeting one's next-door neighbour . . ."

"They'll be steaming in from the City in a minute."

They steamed in from the City. The acolytes on the lawn completed their ritual, still unobserved. *La Ronde* continued until it was time to dress for a dance in honour of some beagles.

Next day Bedser supplanted Beria in the lunch editions. But sales were still slack. That was too like cricket.

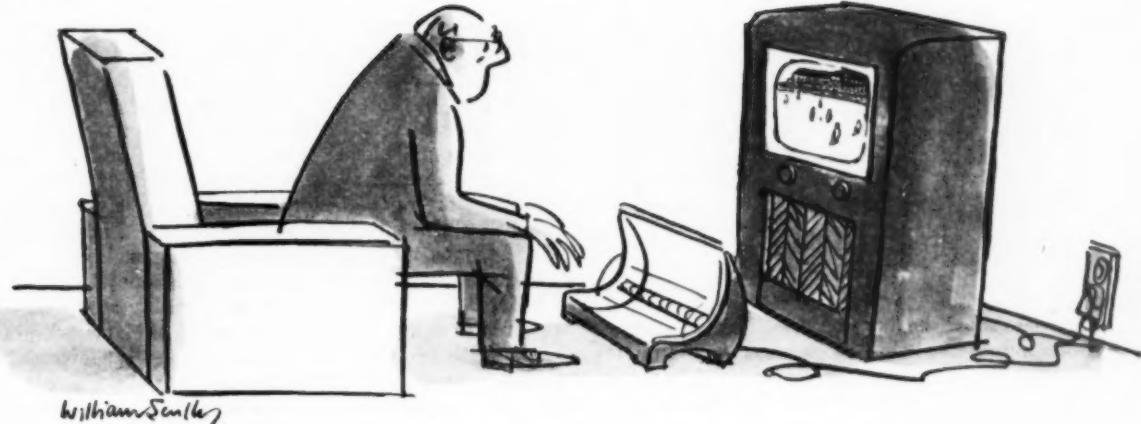
KINROSS

6 6

"BONNY BABIES"

To celebrate the opening of her new popular priced studio
A—B—
offers a SAVINGS CERTIFICATE
to the boniest baby she photographs between now and July 31, 1953, and to Mummy and Daddy
a FRAMED ENLARGEMENT"
Newbury Weekly News

Any X-rays?



Beware the Trojan Snakes

THREE is not, at first glance, any direct connection between a Trojan priest of the twelfth century B.C. and a second-hand car dealer of Baltimore named Temus Bright. But they have this in common, that they both sought to propitiate their gods by such means as lay within their power. Laocoön tried to smooth Poseidon by sacrificing a bull; Mr. Bright, more recently, went after Senator McCarthy with an eight-foot-high granite monument, inscribed with the Senator's name.

The connection may not, as yet, seem to the reader particularly close. But there is more to come. And in any case it is high time some notice was taken of Laocoön, one of the most neglected heroes of antiquity. So good an opportunity may not arise again.

It is not that Laocoön's name is unknown to the general public. On the contrary, it is well known, and might—but for a certain vagueness about the pronunciation—be frequently on people's lips. But it is safe to say that all that the man in the street knows about Laocoön is that he was a great deal bothered by snakes. That supreme moment in his career, so admirably portrayed in bronze by Agesander, Polydorus and Athenodorus of Rhodes, and reproduced a million times in popular works on ancient art, is familiar to all. Tens of thousands have tried in vain to trace the convolutions of the two serpents about the bodies of Laocoön and his two sons, and have experienced perhaps, as they pored over the photographs, a momentary desire to get to the Vatican (where the original is) and find out what went on at the back. But of all that led up to this disastrous climax, the general public is ignorant. If it thinks about the matter at all, it is content to assume that the simultaneous entanglement in snakes of a whole family was just one of those accidents of history—perhaps worth a ten-point headline "SERPENTS SLAY THREE" in the *Trojan Times*.

Here then, in case anyone in Hollywood is interested, is the synopsis.

LAOCOÖN, a man in whose complex make-up the claims of love, religion, and patriotism were fated to clash—a clash that brought him finally to destruction

—began his career as a priest of Apollo in the mighty, albeit windy, city of Troy at the time of the well-known siege. Falling in love with a girl who need not detain us here, he married in opposition to Apollo's wishes and was unfrocked, but later had the misfortune to be chosen by lot to be priest of

POSEIDON, a sea-god of uncertain temper, who was violently anti-Trojan because of the misdemeanours of

LAOMEDON, lately king of Troy, who had failed to pay Poseidon the wages due to him for building the walls of that city—a menial task imposed upon the sea-god by that old rascal

ZEUS.

It will be clear to the least intellectual of my readers (who are now at liberty to read on) that the assignment held by Laocoön was an awkward one. Already in the bad books of Apollo, whose arrows were invariably fatal, he now found himself attached in an official capacity to a god who was the sworn enemy of his city, who had once sent a sea-monster to ravage the surrounding territory (flashback?), and who had for some ten years been assisting the invading Greeks by every means in his power. To propitiate so relentless an enemy, while dodging the arrows of Apollo and keeping a home going for Mrs. Laocoön and the boys, was enough to tax the ingenuity and resource of any priest. Yet—and this is where Laocoön emerges in so heroic and filmworthy a light—he deliberately enraged Poseidon afresh by warning the Trojans against dragging the wooden horse into their city, a project on which the pro-Greek god had naturally set his heart. That done, and the claims of patriotism satisfied, Laocoön remembered his religious duties and went out to sacrifice a bull.

One can admire the pertinacity of the man while regretting his rashness in setting up the sacrificial altar so near the high-tide mark as, according to Virgil's account, he seems to have done. For Poseidon was not the god to be bought off with a single bull. Nor is it clear why Laocoön's two sons were involved in this risky undertaking. But involved they were, and that speedily. Two vast sea-snakes came bounding over the waves, dragged their hideous coils up the beach (what a chance for 3-D!), and in the twinkling of an eye attacked the unsuspecting youths. Up, for all the



world as though he were an American Marine, dashed Laocoön (bringing help and weapons, says Virgil, though the latter are missing in the statue), and, in a trice got himself involved in the hopeless predicament you can see in the Vatican. The snakes, after wrapping up the boys, still had plenty to spare for father. Moreover, they were poisonous, and the affair, I regret to say, was swiftly over. The Laocoöns breathed no more.

It is now time to return to Mr. Temus Bright, whose monument, besides the inscription "Senator Joseph McCarthy, American," and (rather inexplicably) a funeral urn, includes a bas-relief panel showing McCarthy himself, clad in a loincloth and "wrestling," in Mr. Bright's own words, "with a bunch of snakes." Here, then, is my justification for bringing Laocoön into the business; and if any doubt remains it will be dispelled

by the statement in the *Daily Telegraph*, "The panel appeared to be a crude copy of the famous statuary group, Laocoön. Senator McCarthy's face is substituted for that of the unfortunate priest of Apollo."

All I now desire to ask is whether, if Mr. Bright (who commissioned the monument) or the "local tombstone maker" (who carried it out) had known a little more of the history of Laocoön, they would have chosen to identify him with their hero. Laocoön was a great man all right; that I hope I have made clear. But he got the worst of it. And one cannot believe that Mr. Bright, who is said to be politically ambitious and to have an eye on the Governorship of Maryland, would hope to propitiate Senator McCarthy by representing him as getting the worst of whatever snakes he has on hand at the moment. It seems to me, writing far from Baltimore, that Senator McCarthy would prefer to appear as one of the more successful snake-wrestlers—Hercules, for example. Best of all, perhaps, would it be to show him wrestling with a wooden horse. I should like to see that.

Whether Mr. Bright's sacrifice—and the monument, I see, cost him a round £1,000—will be more successful in winning his divinity's good graces than was Laocoön's bull remains to be seen. All my paper says is that the monument is to be stored, as "Senator McCarthy has no immediate use for it." Ominous words.

H. F. ELLIS

ε ε

HIS MASTER'S VOICE

A Tallinn haberdasher has been sentenced to twenty-two years' imprisonment for making trouser buttons out of gramophone records of songs praising Stalin.

SEVENTEEN years from now, if I earn a bit of a remission,
They'll start to re indoctrinate me. Then I'll know I'm away.
It was bad enough about the buttons. If they hear about the other items,
It'll be Siberia for certain; and I'll be going there to stay.

What about the portrait banners I cut up for ornamental braces,
Or the Muffin the Mule I made from the model of Stalin as a boy,
Or the busts I put red hats on and sold as gnomes for the garden,
Or the picture where I painted the moustache out and did it up as Myrna Loy,

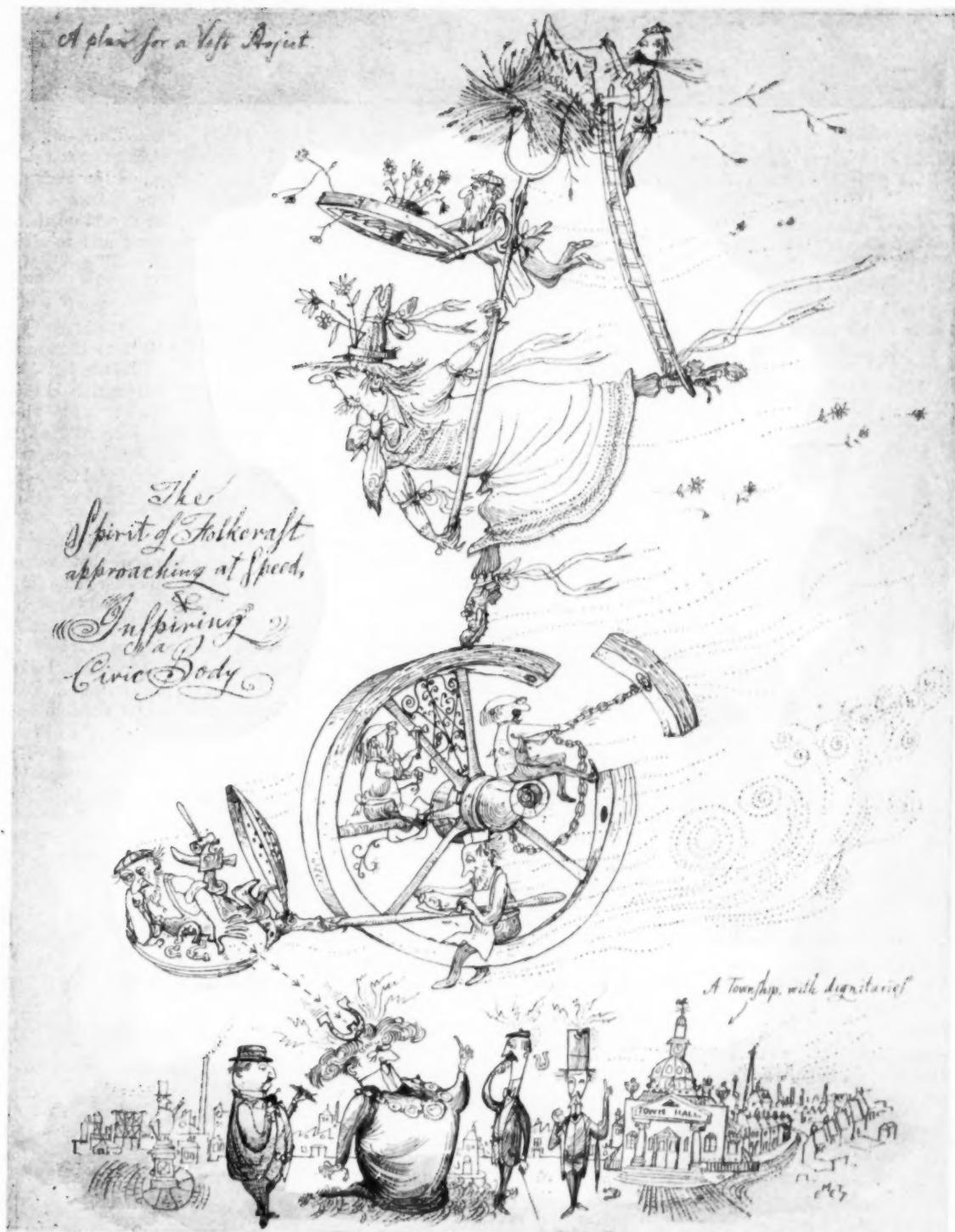
Or the book of speeches I pulped and sold as deodorant containers,
Or the song-sheets padding the seat of the sofa in my Anna's flat?
Dynamite, any one of them, if ever they happen to be spotted,
And I shan't be able to relax till I know for certain about that.

Pure bad luck, in a way. If only the chap who bought them
Had sewn them on two days later, after I had planned to move,
Or had cut his nails in the morning before putting on his trousers,
Or just not dragged his nail along that particular groove,

We shouldn't have had that button coming out with "Long live Stalin"
Or the second button from the bottom saying "God bless Uncle Joe."
Still, when all's said, I'd like to have been there and seen his expression,
Or been at the OGPU office when they made him play it over slow.

Anyway, there it is. I'm lucky it's only prison,
And the life isn't all that different in or out of the pen.
Seventeen years from now there'll still be a market in buttons.
And I wonder whose songs of praise will be Government Surplus then.

P. M. HUBBARD



The Duke of Devonshire, opening an open-air folk museum at Shibden Hall, said that Halifax was blazing the trail of folk museums and he hoped other places would copy the example.

Monday, July 6

Although many other items of business figured on the agenda, it was plain that

House of Lords:
Federation Approved
House of Commons:
Navy Reviewed

main interest in the House of Commons was concentrated on the case of a man who had been hanged for the alleged murder of his infant daughter, but as to whose guilt doubt had now

Scott Henderson, Q.C., to make a full inquiry, with Mr. George Blackburn, Assistant Chief Constable of the West Riding, to assist him. Mr. Henderson had been asked to express an opinion whether there is any ground for thinking there may have been a miscarriage of justice.

There seemed to be some misgiving among Members about the decision to hold the inquiry in private, but Mr. Henderson was quoted as saying that a public inquiry would make his task impossible, so it was left at that.

Before this dramatic interlude, Mr. GEOFFREY LLOYD, as Fuel Minister, had answered many questions about the prospective shortage of house coal this winter. Best coal is to be increased in price, the less good reduced, in the hope that this will raise the sale of coal which is smaller, but, the Minister was careful to stress, is at least as good as the bigger lumps. Members looked a trifle sceptical—the memory of the late Nutty Slack dies hard.

Mr. BUTLER gave what was taken as a hint that the General Assembly of the United Nations may be summoned to deal with the still-obstinate President Syngman Rhee if the Korean deadlock goes on.

After which there was discussion on the usual class-conscious lines about entry of cadets into the Royal Navy. The Opposition again expressed the view that snobbery and the lack of an Old School Tie and Old School "Polish" (whatever that may mean) kept many deserving boys from grammar and other schools out of the Navy. But Old Rugbeian Mr. J. P. L. THOMAS, the First Lord of the Admiralty, did not admit this for a moment, and refused to make "snap decisions," anyway.

Various speakers displayed a most un-sailorlike agitation and heat on the issue, but Mr. THOMAS's view prevailed in the end.

Over in the Lords, the proposed Federation of the two Rhodesias and Nyasaland was under debate, and

Lord JOWITT repeated the statesmanlike appeal already made by Mr. ATTLEE that, when the Federation comes into being, Africans and all others concerned should do their best to make it work and to sink differences in an ocean of goodwill.

Tuesday, July 7

Sir IAN FRASER wanted a special medal struck for climbers of Mount

House of Commons:
Finance Bill Again

Everest, but Mr. BUTLER said this was not the Government's intention. When Sir IAN pressed, Mr. BUTLER pointed out that there was no medal for those who explored, say, Africa or other parts of the world.

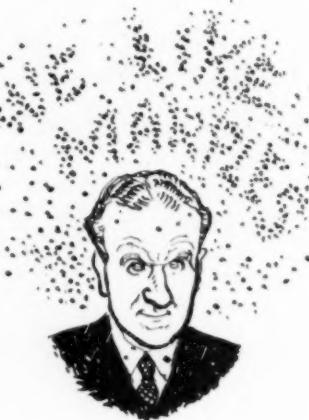
It grew so dark in the Chamber during the afternoon that voices came out of the murk for some time until Mr. Speaker switched the lights on. In the general illumination Members vied with each other in setting Ministers impossible tasks. Mr. SHINWELL, for instance, from his position of greater freedom and less responsibility on the Front Opposition Bench, invited Mr. BUTLER to do what was reasonable (in the matter of increasing M.P.s' salaries) "without regard to unpopularity." Mr. BUTLER replied



Mr. Geoffrey Lloyd defended the quality of small coal.

arisen. The case of "Rex v. Evans," as Sir DAVID MAXWELL FYFE and other lawyers impersonally called it, had aroused great interest throughout the land, since an accused man in another case, one John Christie, had thrown doubt on the rightness of the verdict in Evans's case by himself "confessing" that he had killed Evans's wife.

So there was an intense silence when Sir DAVID rose and announced that he had appointed Mr. John



The Housing Minister was called upon to stamp out a plague of black flies.

gaily that that was the way in which the present Government approached *all* problems.

Scarcely had this Labour of Hercules been imposed when Mr. GRAEME FINLAY asked Mr. MARPLES, of the Housing Ministry, to "stamp on" black flies which, it seems, gather in untold millions near a water reservoir at Chingford. Mr. MARPLES was non-committal.

And so to the Finance Bill, on Report Stage, which seemed to be concerned mainly with "agricultural implements"—mounted on tractors—which either are, or are not, tax-free. Whatever it was, the Government sought to put it right—or wrong, according to the side of the House on which one sat. Everybody seemed to have quite a pleasant if not very informative time.

Their Lordships approved the Central African Federation plan. The Commons sat till 2 a.m.

Wednesday, July 8

Question-time had about it something of the liveliness one takes as a matter of course

House of Commons: A Certain Liveliness when Sir WINSTON is in attendance, and it was certainly a good afternoon for the Treasury Bench, with Ministers scoring those thousand-per-cent points (as Parliamentary points go) they doubtless dream about.

Mr. BUTLER was quizzed about calling an international meeting to talk over Britain's participation in a European Army and replied—shall we say?—non-committally. Whereupon Mr. SHINWELL (of all people) accused him of being "snooky," only to receive the brisk retort that he (Mr. Butler) was not nearly so snooky as was Mr. SHINWELL. (Presumably "snooky" now becomes a Parliamentary word.)

Mr. MORRISON dashed to the aid of the blushing Mr. SHINWELL and complained that the Chancellor was "rather cross and bad-tempered"—to which Mr. BUTLER, with a hearty chuckle, rapped back that Mr. MORRISON would get no rise out of him and that he had merely been replying in kind to the "somewhat pert observations" from across the House.

And then Mr. LENNOX-BOYD was asked to explain some of the appointments to a committee of inquiry into London Transport. He defended the appointment of a woman local government officer, Miss Betty Corn, on the ground that she was a member of the "ordinary

Cupid" as the Air Minister put it), and about the lack of friendship for his fellow-diplomats shown by Sir Walford Selby in a recent book. The first discussion had about it something of the whimsy of a Barrie play, and I almost expected to hear soft string music in the background. The second was quite, quite different, and brimstone could distinctly be smelt as Lord READING and others fiercely repudiated Sir Walford, who spent many (apparently unhappy) years at the Foreign Office. Nothing much came of it.

Thursday, July 9

Mr. BUTLER continued the sport of Opposition-baiting with a nimble brightness that **House of Commons: More Liveliness.** delighted the House—one side,

at any rate. When Mr. JAY asked when more Members of the House of Commons would be included in the Cabinet, he said this was a matter on which he did not propose to satisfy the inquirer's curiosity. When Mr. ATTLEE said his own Government had reduced the number of Peers in the Cabinet from four to three, Mr. BUTLER said that perhaps explained the decline in the prestige of the Socialist Government. And so on.

But the Chancellor had two strange lapses: he forgot the fact that the Prime Minister is among the Cabinet's sick-list and had to be reminded, and he actually fell for the old "Have-you-stopped-beating-your-wife?" question in a new form.

Mr. HERBERT MORRISON asked, all wily-like: "In your acting rank, are you going to treat the House even worse than did the Prime Minister?" To which Mr. BUTLER replied: "No, Sir!" Some of his Ministerial colleagues looked a trifle startled, but the Opposition apparently did not see their advantage.

Friday, July 10

The Bill to set up Marshall Aid Memorial (or Thank-You) Scholarships at British **House of Commons: More Thanks to the U.S.** Universities for U.S. students

passed its remaining stages, with the same unanimity shown on the Second Reading.

GUY EDEN



"Relations between the members of the American Air Force and the local civilian population are excellent," said Lord Montagu of Beaufieu.

travelling public"—so often overlooked by these high-powered committees—and that of Mr. George Schwartz, the distinguished journalist, because he would ensure that the report was not only valuable but also extremely readable.

The effect on the Opposition was extraordinary. They showed every sign of acute embarrassment while the Government side cheered itself hoarse for two whole minutes.

Their Lordships were talking of Anglo-American friendship (mainly as shown by U.S. airmen and British girls, with the aid of "the airman

CRITICISM

BOOKING OFFICE

Orwell

George Orwell. Tom Hopkinson. Published for the British Council and National Book League. *Longmans*, 2/-

BEFORE he died, in January, 1950, George Orwell left instructions that no official biography of himself should be written. Quite why he did this is hard to guess. He must have known that he would be the subject of discussion and controversy; he was by no means indifferent to an author's natural desire to achieve fame. Painfully sensitive about his personal life, he was perhaps anxious that the striking self-portrait his own work provides—on the whole a very just one—should not be modified in detail by subsequent investigation. However, if there is to be no "Life and Letters" from which people can draw their own conclusions, additional onus must rest on such critical and biographical material as does appear. Mr. Tom Hopkinson is, therefore, to be particularly congratulated on the excellent account he gives in this pamphlet of Orwell's writings and his character.

Eric Blair was Orwell's real name. He always preferred to write under a pseudonym, choosing the East Anglian river near which he lived as a boy, because in early life he disliked the idea of being Scotch; although in his last years he bought a cottage on Jura and took some interest in the country from which his family originally came. He was born in 1903, son of a British official in Bengal; educated as a King's Scholar at Eton; served in the Indian Imperial Police in Burma for five years; resigned; then tried his hand at various jobs (usually providing only a bare existence), while he built up a reputation as a writer. *Animal Farm* (1945) brought him world-wide recognition, though, in the usual sense, his chief gifts are not as a novelist. His essays, literary

or sociological, are notable for their originality and brilliance.

The point that Mr. Hopkinson puts so well—and with the greatest understanding and sympathy—is that, although in many ways the most honest and forthright of men, Orwell's innate romanticism sometimes invested his actions and views with a kind of unreality. For

clearly possessed this same characteristic, and there can be no doubt that, as writers, they have something in common. It was as if Orwell feared that material things would get the better of him unless he made them yield up their secrets, e.g. his "12 rules for making a good cup of tea."

He possessed a strange simplicity about the way people lived, so that some of the Aunt Sallies he attacked so ferociously could be found to have peacefully passed away half a century before. I should say that certainly up to the war he pictured a considerable world in existence in which the men could not be seen out of a top hat during the London "season"; while, in one of his essays, he speaks of English hospital nurses wearing "Union Jack badges." One wonders where, in fact, it would have been possible to purchase a "Union Jack badge," even in 1929: and, if procurable, whether nurses would not be much more likely to buy instead a packet of cigarettes.

Side by side with this kind of social innocence, he had his own shrewdness and canniness. His advice was usually worth asking, and in intellectual matters he had the trained mind of a scholarship boy. He speaks of having "done no work at Eton," but school-lists of his period show no evidence that he was below his contemporary scholars in examinations; and without some industry he would certainly not have been able to maintain that position. It is true that he was rather inept at practical things, which prevented him from becoming the man of action; that was always, I think, his deepest ambition. That his health prevented his taking any operational part in the war was a bitter blow.

Kind and generous, he was not on the whole greatly interested in the individual lives of other people. If you broached a subject to him that did not immediately strike him as worth his consideration he would shy his head away like a horse offered



example, the horrible experiences described in *Down and Out in Paris and London* were never precisely those of a man truly at the end of his tether. When Orwell had had enough of them for his own purposes he was able, by borrowing a few pounds from a friend, to terminate at least the worst of his poverty and squalor. At the same time it would be unjust to say that he "only did it to write a book," although the experience was, in a sense, artificial.

He was, indeed, a man who found it hard, perhaps impossible, to live in a manner that was not in some odd way artificial. Perhaps this was because he rarely allowed himself to like things for their own sake. On a country walk he would concern himself with rare plants of the neighbourhood, or the peculiarities of the local style of gatefastening. It was as if material detail was all important. Kipling

some unacceptable fodder. He thought Gissing the greatest English novelist. Perhaps (I cannot remember) that was why he had taken the Christian name of "George". People who read Mr. Hopkinson's admirable account of Orwell should also be assured that he was a friend for whom it was impossible not to feel a very deep affection.

ANTHONY POWELL

Sweet and Dry

The Bicycle Rider in Beverly Hills.
William Saroyan. *Faber*, 12/6. **Caddie:**
The Autobiography of a Sydney Barmaid. *Constable*, 15/-.

Mr. Saroyan's material is usually himself and, as the years flow by and the words pour on, the material is getting very thin. In this book he is remembering his childhood in an orphanage, the Armenian community in California where his family lived, his boyhood ambitions and his first steps in writing. When he describes incidents or people he writes sharply and clearly, though not very memorably. However, there are other observers of foreign backgrounds and American foregrounds, the brilliant Mr. Wechsberg, for example, so Mr. Saroyan cannily runs a line in poetic prose as well.

Repeatedly he floats away from recording experience into long, almost unreadable affirmations of Joy in Living. On and on they go, as packed with Brave and Beautiful Thoughts as the sound-track of *Limelight*. Like those Armenian rug-sellers who hang about seaside promenades, Mr. Saroyan is apologetic and ingratiating and his wares, like theirs, are woolly. Apparently this kind of stuff sells well—he speaks in the most favourable terms of his financial circumstances—but he once showed enough natural talent to make one wish he had been savagely edited in early life and given the self-discipline that would have stopped him from drivelling himself away.

Unfortunately, American romanticism is stimulated and flattered both by the Armenian Boy Who Makes Good and by the pretty philosophizing. Like Little Nell in her day, Mr. Saroyan steals into many a heart that has been calloused by the frictions of expanding commerce. To those who prefer their stimulants dry and their literature classical, Caddie's sober account of how she struggled to bring up two children in the Slump will be more moving. She rarely comments and she makes no attempt at conspicuous writing; but at the end you know what it feels like to walk down the drive of an Institution leaving your child behind you; or to serve behind a bar for the first time.

In her introduction, Miss Dymphna Cusack links the autobiography with the Report on the Liquor Trade in New South Wales; this limits it too

much. The bar-room is only one corner of Caddie's battlefield and, in any case, short measures and sodden drinking are not peculiar to the unattractive urban area that she describes. Most recent autobiographies have been about childhood in Gracious Homes. Here is a throwback to the period of *Love on the Dole*, no less disturbing because its setting is Australian.

R. G. G. PRICE

information, the dreadful predicament both of the public and the patient is fairly faced. Anyone who wishes to maintain an intelligent conversation on criminal lunatics should read this book.

G. T.

For Esme—With Love and Squator.

J. D. Salinger. *Hamish Hamilton*, 10/6

Mr. Salinger's "The Catcher in the Rye" showed his inventiveness and his accuracy; it added both to the novel and to our knowledge of adolescence. Now he adds to the short story. His tales are different from other people's and different from one another. The title-story is already a classic. He has a wonderful ear for the varieties of tone and diction within the same class or age group; but he is not a mere reproducer, like a bird mimic. I like his pedantic, lonely children better than his female drunks, and his grim, eerie humour better than the sentimentality that sometimes drives it out.

I do not see why Mr. Salinger should be criticized because, among more classy virtues, his stories are entertaining and readable. Efficiency of presentation is not evidence of the superficiality that the cliché attributes to "the magazine story," but of a courteous attitude to the reader. He is a serious artist of the greatest distinction, a tragi-comic writer of penetrating sympathy and a man who uses new material to make new things.

R. G. G. P.

The Christ's Hospital Book. Hamish Hamilton, 25/-

"Christ's Hospital is a thing without parallel in the country and *sui generis*," say the Schools Inquiry Commissioners of 1867. It is therefore



fitting that, when the school is celebrating its quatercentenary, a book of this kind, part anthology, part history, should be issued—anthology because of the school's long connection with the profession of letters, history because of its peculiar place in our educational system.

Here are selections from the golden generation of Lamb, Coleridge and Leigh Hunt to Blunden, Middleton Murry and Constant Lambert of our own day, in which these and other writers recall memories of their life at the school. Contributions to the historical section have been drawn from a variety of sources. The school's place in its modern setting is admirably dealt with by the present headmaster and others, mainly Old Blues. There is finally a surprisingly large bibliography and over fifty illustrations. The modesty and integrity of the Blue-coat Boy have seen to it that there is none of the nauseous self-congratulation so often found in productions of this kind.

P. C.

Angela Burdett-Coutts and the Victorians. Clara Burdett-Patterson. Murray, 18/-

The lady who tackled on her own initiative the problems of unemployment and housing shortage, who endowed bishoprics and mitigated the distresses of an Irish famine, is here remembered not mainly for her princely generosity or for the overflowing popular affection they won, but for her long friendships with three famous men of her period and for their many letters to her.

The great Duke of Wellington, forty years her senior, but always her much-loved cavalier, was prone to rather comical solicitude in his correspondence. Rajah Brooke of Sarawak wrote often with affectionate gratitude for help including the gift of a man-of-war to his struggling Raj, and at one time had actually named her as his successor. Charles Dickens, the third of this surprising trio, meeting her on profounder levels of shared social service, learned to come to her for sympathy in his own most human troubles. Apart from the story of these great intimacies this book is something of a muddle, but much may be forgiven for a reminder of a most notable personality.

C. C. P.

In the Wet. Nevil Shute. Heinemann. 12/6

In the nineteen-eighties or nineties the Dominions are getting along pretty well, thanks to use of the multiple vote, a system by which extra votes are given to each individual for higher education, following a profession, earning over five thousand a year, and so on. Not surprisingly this system ensures the election of "a better class of politician altogether." Poor old

single-vote England, however, is still stumbling in the Socialist morass, with a Secretary of State for Air who drops his aitches and can't tell a radar device from a Very pistol.

The Prime Minister, a dangerous Welshman, behaves pretty rottenly to the Royal family (the present one), which makes the Australian pilot hero get hot under the collar. He has been made a member of the Queen's Flight, and is delighted to whisk the Queen and her Consort off to Australia while Field Marshal Tom Forrest, appointed Governor-General of Britain with semi-dictatorial powers, tells Parliament that the country must have electoral reform "or they can kiss the Queen good-bye." This infantile essay in fictional politics is dreamed by a dying drunk under the influence of opium.

J. S.

Mr. Smith from Dresden. Glynn Williamson. Hodder and Stoughton. 10/6

Miss Williamson tells her story under some disadvantages, including a heroine named Charlie and an irritating narrative form which wrenches us, from chapter to chapter, to the viewpoint of the various characters involved. But the reader who tastes a book by flicking through it on the alert for shortcomings of this kind should not, for once, be too prejudiced. This light, bright novel, with thriller elements carefully superimposed on a plainly authentic background of British official life in present-day Berlin, is well-planned and intelligently executed, with guaranteed mystification to the statutory last chapter.

J. B. B.

AT THE PLAY

King Henry V (OLD VIC)
Julius Caesar (WESTMINSTER)

THE players of the Bristol Old Vic have such a lovely theatre that I always admire their unselfishness in leaving it. They have made a number of useful salutes on London, notably the production of "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" which Mr. DENIS CAREY brought us last year, and their work is never uninteresting; but this *Henry V*, up for a fortnight, fell short of their usual standard.

On all sides Mr. JOHN NEVILLE, who took the *King*, has been accused of imitating Sir John Gielgud. The grounds seemed to me slight, and if he did, the model was a good one. A more valid criticism is that in voice and manner he is still too limited an actor for the full sweep of the part, in which Mr. Alec Clunes's magnificent performance of two years ago remains the yardstick. Mr. NEVILLE's voice, pushed too hard, played awkward tricks on him, and he failed to vary a few facial expressions which soon became familiar. It was a small-scale *Henry*, making disappointingly little of the great speeches, yet to be praised on two scores. *Henry's* sudden emergence in the first scene as a practical administrator calmly launching a great continental operation is seldom quite convincing. Here Mr. NEVILLE prepared us for it by giving him an air of shrewd calculation, so that we had already accepted the eclipse of the playboy before the arrival of the *Dauphin's* present. The second point was Mr. NEVILLE's conduct of the night scene before the battle, when



King Henry the Fifth—Mr. JOHN NEVILLE; *Katherine*—MISS MAUREEN QUINNEY
Fluellen—Mr. DAVID BIRD; *Pistol*—Mr. JAMES CAIRNCROSS

Henry's visit to his soldiers was so datelessly natural that it would almost have fitted into *Journey's End*.

Mr. CAREY's treatment of several of the minor characters helped to inject some needed life into his production. Mr. DAVID BIRD's *Fluellen*, a delightful piece of lusty eccentricity seen as a whole, would have been good on any stage. Miss DOROTHY REYNOLDS described *Falstaff's* death beautifully, as if she really felt it; Mr. JAMES CAIRNCROSS (looking remarkably like a twin to Mr. Robert Eddison) made *Pistol* better company than he usually is, and Mr. JOHN RUDDOCK played *Exeter* with the quiet authority of a man to whom men listen. As for the set, Mr. PATRICK ROBERTSON's simple arrangement was immediately attractive, and remained so throughout the evening, marking the changes of scene by the movement of a few curtains, grouped like pillars. This is surely the way to stage Shakespeare, though producers are loath to believe it.

And even in simplicity they can be wide of the mark. The Elizabethan Theatre Company, made up of young professionals from the universities and dramatic schools, exists to tour Shakespeare as portably as possible, and so the scenery must be slight; it is not that, but its ginerack appearance that worried me. A few honest boxes would have been better than spindly bits of carpentering that seemed to have been left over from the furnishing of a nursery school.

These hard-working young players, some of whom take as many as six parts, are doing a commendable job, but one which scarcely justifies a West End appearance. Mr. MICHAEL MACOWAN has taught them to speak very clearly, and their team spirit was engaging; what they have not yet learned is to speak with much feeling or to act sufficiently below the surface to bring to full life a play of the weight of *Julius Caesar*. The *Cassius* of Mr. COLIN GEORGE was the most successful, followed by Mr. TOBY ROBERTSON's *Mark Antony* and Mr. PETER JEFFREY's *Caesar*.

Recommended

For a play of serious discussion, Graham Greene's *The Living Room* (Wyndham's). For a neat light comedy *Dear Charles* (New), hand-made for Yvonne Arnaud. And for a first-rate musical, *Guys and Dolls* (Coliseum), based on Runyon. ERIC KEOWN

AT THE PICTURES



The Square Ring
Split Second

THE original play by RALPH W. PETERSON on which *The Square Ring* (Directors: MICHAEL RELPH and BASIL DEARDEN) is based probably

made a more original impression (as boxing stories go) precisely because of the limitation of scene which the film version is of course concerned to get rid of. By getting away as much as possible from the boxers' dressing-room, into other rooms and cafés and streets and the ring itself, this simply becomes more reminiscent of such films as *The Set-Up* and *Champion* than it would otherwise be. Some of the dialogue scenes between the ageing boxer (ROBERT BEATTY) and his anxious, disapproving ex-wife (BERNADETTE O'FARRELL) even seem to be lit and presented exactly like those

performances. On the face of it JACK WARNER, in one of his "fatherly" parts as the handler in charge of the dressing-room, is the most dominating and sympathetic figure; but the most popular will almost certainly be BILL OWEN as the cocky cheerful lightweight. It's a part without undertones and one might be tempted to think it was easy to play, but Mr. OWEN does it with captivating skill and bounce and makes it irresistibly funny.

There are many other well-done small parts, and the ringside and crowd scenes, though inevitably to a familiar pattern, are often touched with fresh-



(*The Square Ring*)

Deakon—ALF HINES

Happy—BILL OWEN

Rowdie—BILL TRAVERS

Whitey—GEORGE ROSE

Kid Curtis—ROBERT BEATTY

between the similar characters in *The Set-Up*.

Unfortunately there are, or at least the convention is that there are, only a few dramatic situations connected with boxing; they have all been used in films again and again, and several of them turn up here, each of the boxers present in the dressing-room having his part in one. Suppose more than one of the little group happened to be an ex-champion trying to come back, or a man who was "throwing" his fights, or a punch-drunk veteran, or any of the other types? Well, that would probably make a story too, but it would also probably be thought too daringly subtle for the simple public, because the two different men would in each case have to be different in character, and the simple public would be quite baffled by the suggestion that people who do the same sort of thing could be anything but exactly the same sort of people.

The merit of the picture is nearly all in the scenes that are, I imagine, very much what they were on the stage—and they are carried by good acting, some of it by men repeating their stage

ness in detail, visually and by smart cutting. I found the whole thing quite enjoyable.

Split Second (Director: DICK POWELL) is a good example of the thriller founded on a variant of that situation that has made a number of good films: *The Small Voice*, *The Dark Past*, *Key Largo*—oh, too many to list. It seldom fails to produce something worth seeing, this formula of the fugitive law-breakers who hold up and terrorize a group of people in some isolated spot. The isolation may be metaphorical or literal; in this instance it is both, a deserted "ghost town" in the Nevada desert, in the danger area for an impending atom-bomb test.

This is remarkably well done. DICK POWELL began as a singer, and perhaps it is not fanciful to blame this fact for the excessive faith he shows in accompanying music in the first part of the picture; but he later became a straight player in tough private-eye thrillers, some of them very good, and it looks as if he got the right ideas about technique from those. He is well served by his actors, particularly

STEPHEN McNALLY as the chief villain, and by his director of photography, NICHOLAS MUSURACA.

* * * * *
Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Les Sept Péchés Capitaux (24/12/52) is back in London. Various other old faiths are still about, including *Moulin Rouge* (25/3/53), *Adorable Creatures* (10/6/53), and *The Beggar's Opera* (17/6/53). You may just catch the last days of *The Captain's Paradise* (24/6/53) and *Malta Story* (8/7/53).

Another comparatively undistinguished lot of releases; the only one written about here is *Titanic* (1/7/53).

RICHARD MALLETT

 **At the Gallery**
Contrast in Satire

THE Rowlandson / and Gillray exhibition at the Whitechapel Art Gallery (very accessible, a few yards from Aldgate East Underground Station, admission free) remains open until the end of July. It will appeal to all lovers of drawings and students of English social history and English humour. The Rowlandsons are all drawings and the Gillrays, more uniformly finished, coloured engravings.

These two artists, contemporaries and satirists, are, as pointed out by John Russell in the foreword to the catalogue, completely unlike each other in temperament. Both have a total lack of false refinement; but while Rowlandson is often coarse and jolly, or tender, Gillray goes further,

and is bitter, merciless and macabre. Indeed, he often repels by his subject matter; but, whether you like him or not, you will be forced to admire the

sure sign of artistry—they decorate at least as much as they illustrate. The Rowlandsons, by their variety, steal the thunder of this show, in spite of being far more subdued in colour than the Gillrays.

In reputation Rowlandson, like many joke-makers, suffers from being dubbed purely a comic. This show, refuting that view of him, will astonish many by the wide range of his subjects and moods, and the elegance, as well as the economy, of his execution. Whether he is drawing the monstrous head of a glutton, the façade of Ham House, Chiswick Mall, or a writhing mass of drunken merry-makers, by his delicate observation and flowing line he unravels the details and links them together into a coherent whole. As if by some magic, his trees, ships, or houses seem as much alive as his people.

His drawing is a personal shorthand derived from European renaissance masters, such as Rubens and Tintoretto, while by his sense of light and atmosphere he belongs to the English family of landscapists such as Bonnington and Constable. His colour is soft and always subservient to his drawing. In marked contrast are the brassy yellows and bitter plums of Gillray, though these are well-suited to the sinister world he conjures up and his heavier-handed touch.

Together these two truly academic draughtsmen afford an exhibition full of enchantment and interest, which should not be missed.

ADRIAN DAINTREY

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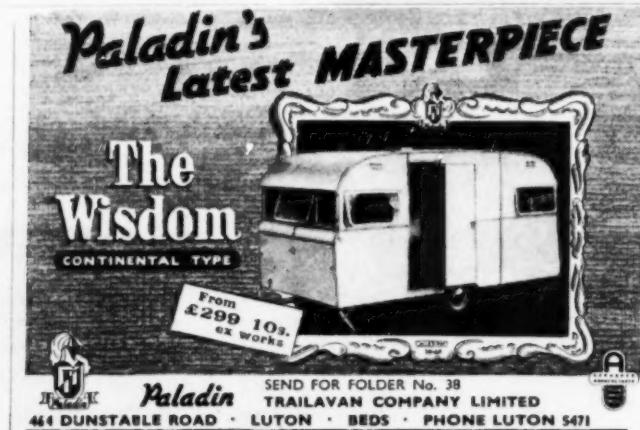


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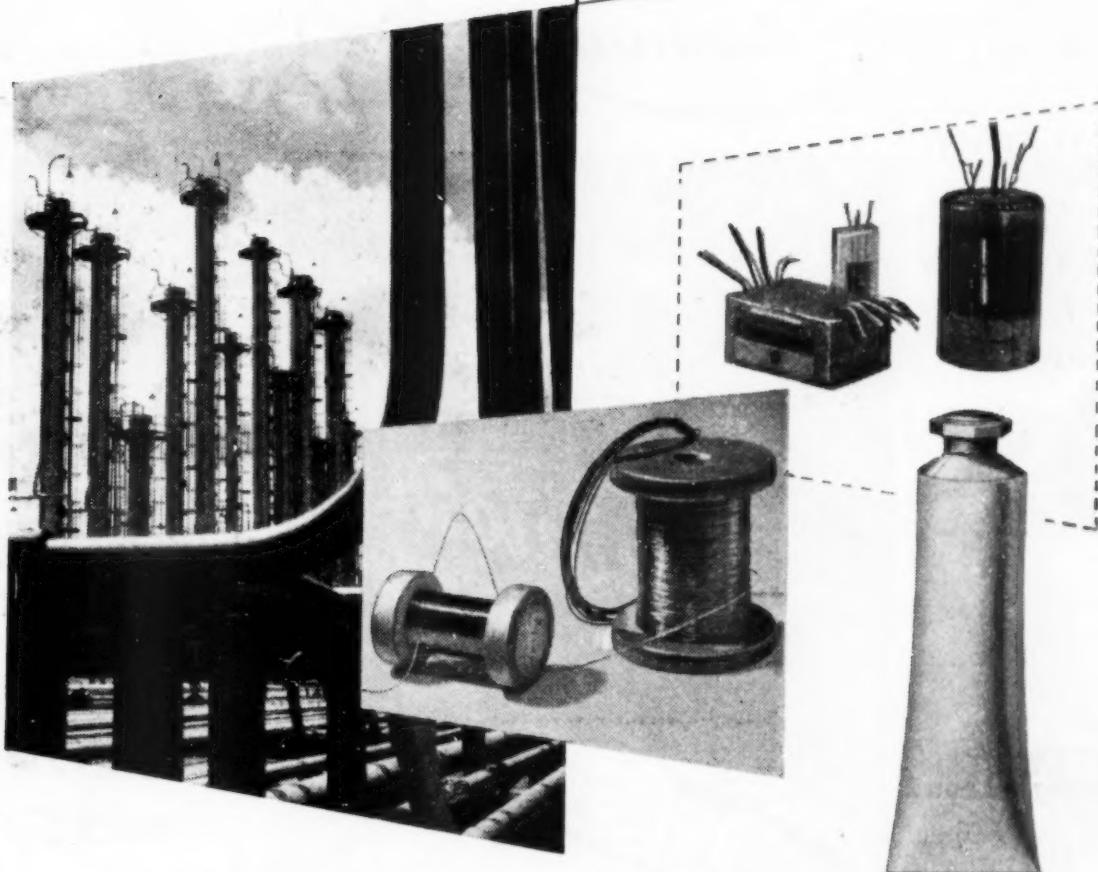
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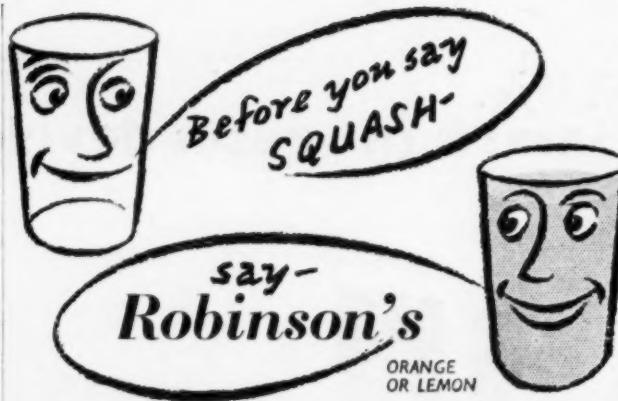
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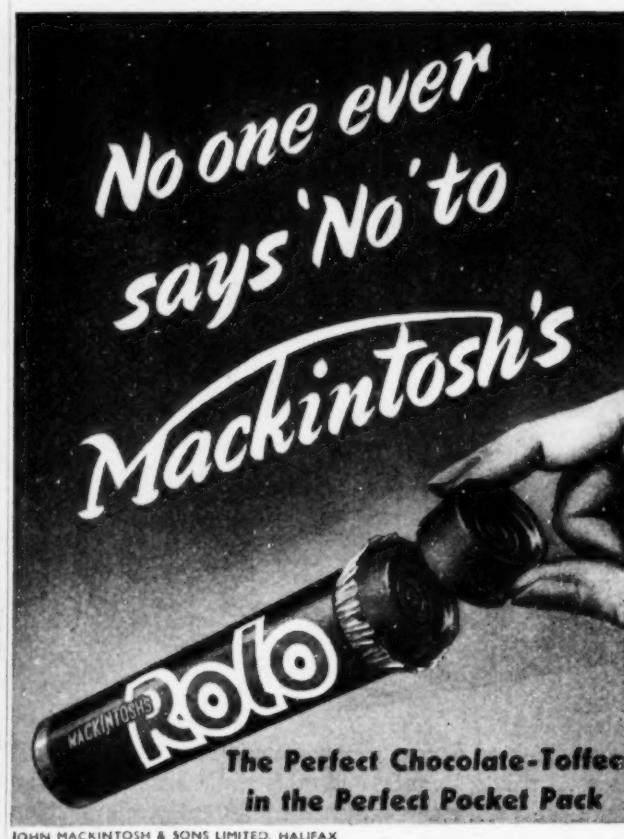
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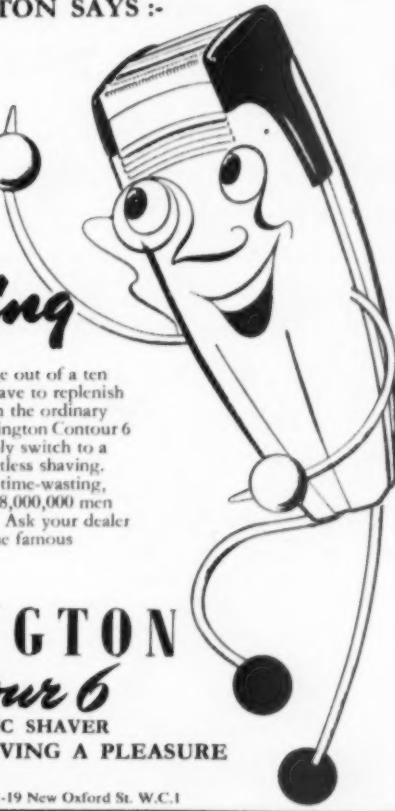
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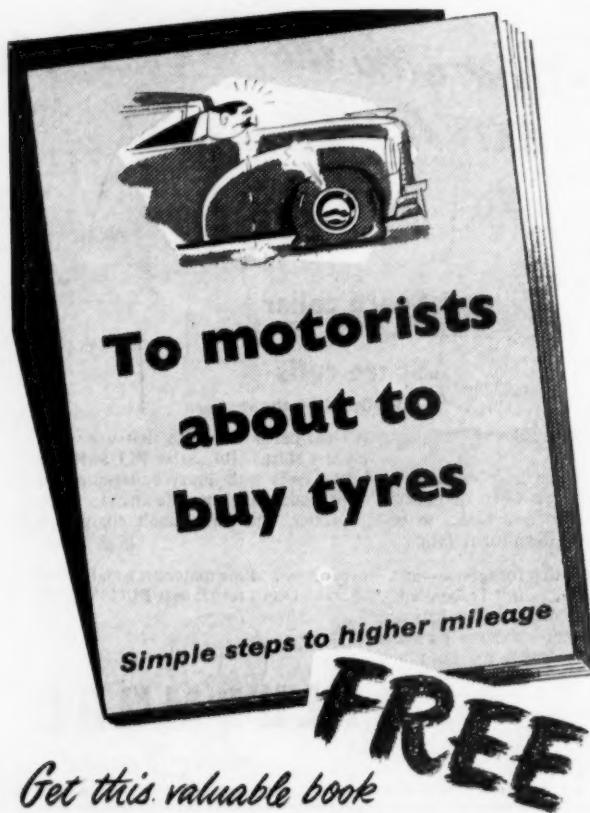
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P.7.

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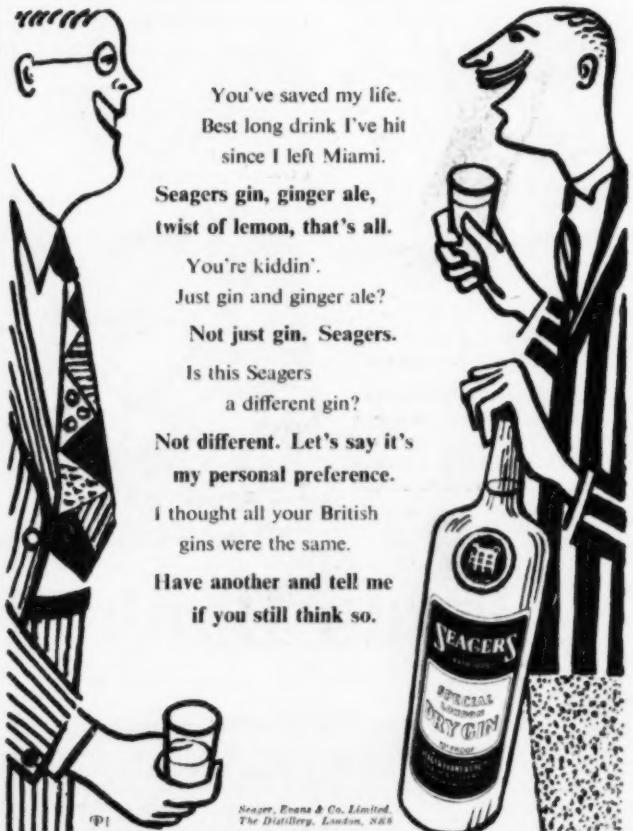


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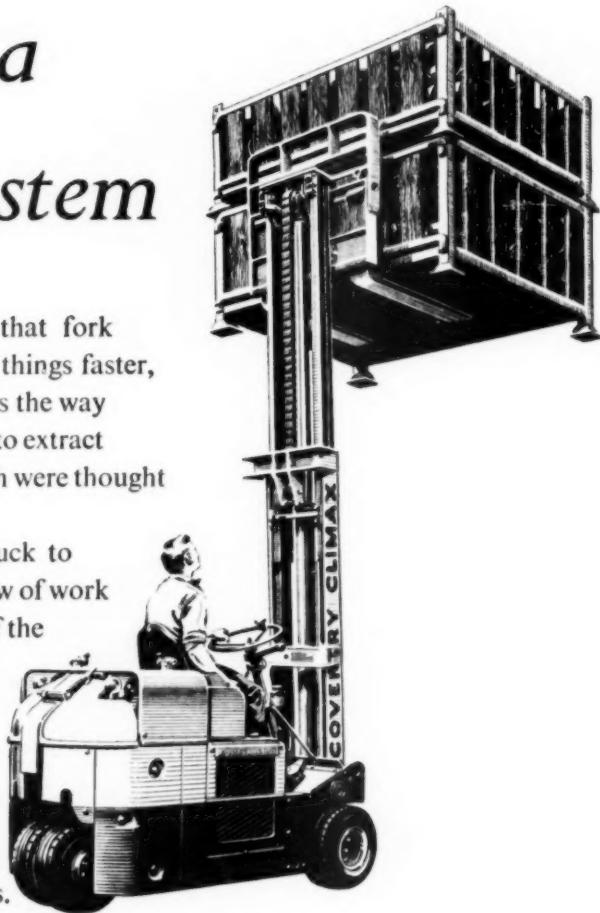
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